Loren: I truly understand how Erap loyalists feel

Story on PAGE A4

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Pacquiao fans beat up rowdy gatecrasher

ISA LANG ANG TARGET KO - ANG DAMING BUMUGBOG SA AKIN ?

GEN. SANTOS CITY—Police yesterday detained a man who was beaten up by onlookers for throwing a beer bottle at world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao at a party, a police investigator said.

PACQUIAO/ A5

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Bert Nievera flees to US leaving millions in debt** ENTERTAINMENT /A26
- **Lobregat dies at 82** NEWS /A3
- **148 dead in Egyptian plane crash** WORLD /A9

Miriam bolts FPJ camp

Erap says Santiago doesn't like Legarda

MIRIAM Santiago: Uncomfortable with "crying lady."

IMEE Marcos asks permission to withdraw as she's confused.

By Armand N. Nocum and Michael Lim Ubac

SENATE Majority Leader Loren Legarda—the candidate pro-Estrada supporters call the "crying lady"—continues to split the opposition.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada yesterday told the INQUIRER that Miriam Defensor-Santiago has withdrawn from the Senate slate of the so-called united opposition, because she could not run on the same ticket as Legarda.

"Miriam called me up from L.A. (Los Angeles), saying she is uncomfortable running in the election side by side with Loren Legarda who (was) instrumental in my downfall," Estrada said in a phone interview.

Ferdie Ramos, an official of Estrada's Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino party, said the image of Legarda shedding tears after 11 senators voted against the opening of the second Jose Velarde envelope during Estrada's impeachment trial was etched in the collective memory of Estrada loyalists.

Legarda's "showmanship" as a "crying lady" helped give credence to the alleged charges against Estrada, Ramos said.

Speaking from Camp Capinpin, Estrada said Santiago had a particular gripe against Legarda. "The senator told me that Legarda is not a genuine oppositionist but merely an opportunist," Estrada said, adding that many opposition leaders have been calling him to express the same view.

Miriam still wants to run for vice president, the former chief executive added. Estrada had earlier endorsed Santiago and Sen. Gregorio Honasan as vice presidential candidate of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Estrada said that Rep. Imee Marcos (Ilocos Norte) had also called him, asking permission to withdraw from the KNP's senatorial slate.

An INQUIRER source in the KNP confirmed that Santiago wanted out of the slate because of Legarda.

"*Nagtatampo siya* (She feels bad)," said the source, a high campaign official, "because Estrada promised her the vice president slot, but it

MIRIAM/ A18

HERE come the veeps, all dressed to win. Senators Loren Legarda and Noli de Castro are principal sponsors and partners at the wedding of TV personalities Julius Babao and Christine Bersola on Dec. 21, 2003.

NELSON VILLARICA/CONTRIBUTOR

'Da King' is no car fancier

By Christian V. Esguerra

HE'S A multi-millionaire many times over but it appears that Fernando Poe Jr. does not fancy the latest models in luxury cars.

True, he has a veritable motorpool at his disposal: 11 vehicles at last count registered in his name. But they are relatively old ones listed with the main headquarters of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Quezon City.

The vehicles are under the actor's real name, Ronald Allan Poe.

The oldest vehicle in the list obtained by the INQUIRER is a 1972 Mercedez Benz with license plate number NDZ-580. The newest is a 1999-model Toyota Hi-Ace van with license WGA-925.

Poe's most expensive car in the list is probably the 1998 Ford Lincoln Navigator (WEP-

DA KING/ A18

Lakas still has to fill up Senate slate

By Carlito Pablo, Michael Lim Ubac and Juliet L. Javellana

THE SENATE lineup of the so-called united opposition was thrown into disarray yesterday after ex-Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago and Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos both opted out of the senatorial race. *(See banner story.)*

Deposed President Joseph Estrada said both politicians had called him up to ask permission to withdraw from the Senate lineup of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

But the turmoil in the senatorial slate of the so-called united opposition was reflected in the administration's own lineup.

Malacañang yesterday added the name of Gov. Parouk Hussin of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to its Senate slate, bringing the declared number of candidates to 10. But the late entry only served to draw attention to the lineup, which remained incomplete two days before the deadline on Jan. 5.

A Palace official said Hussin was tapped after movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s opposition ticket beat the administration to the draw in getting Amina Rasul-Bernardo to represent the Muslim sector. The KNP was also able to get former Interior Secretary Alfredo Lim and former Sen. Ernesto Herrera, who were on the administration's short list.

LAKAS/ A4

SM's Sy buying 29% SSS stake in E-PCIBank

By Vic Agustin and Doris C. Dumlao

SHOPPING mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr. is buying the 29 percent controlling stake of the Social Security System in Equitable-PCIBank for about P14 billion, the first in a series of steps that could lead to Equitable-PCIB, the country's third biggest bank, being merged with Sy's much smaller Banco de Oro (BDO).

The deal involves the purchase by BDO of the entire SSS shareholdings in Equitable-PCIBank at P43.50 a share, or about a 30 percent premium on its last trading price of P33.50, according to the terms of a "binding letter of intent" that the BDO disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange late Friday.

The SSS will receive the P14 billion through a combination of a cash down payment and a secured promissory note, said BDO corporate information officer Elmer Serrano in the disclosure.

The acquisition will make the Sy family—whose cash cow is the SM shopping mall empire—the single biggest stockholder in publicly listed Equitable-PCIB.

The holdings of the Go family—which founded Equitable Bank and which gambled the family heirloom in a controversial 1999 takeover of PCIBank—will be reduced to about 24 percent, while the

SM'S/ A5

Triple happiness for Wina, Willie, Wino even if poor

By Michael Lim Ubac

THEIR ONLY wish is to be together forever.

Although they would love to have fancy food on their table, the 8-year-old triplets Willie, Wina and Wino said they would rather dine on banana-cue and *pancit canton* than be separated from each other and their parents.

Though living in abject want, they would want to give to others.

"*Sana po lahat ng bata ay may maraming laruan, pagkain, lalo na ang mahihirap* (I wish that all children will have toys and food, particularly the ones who are poor)," said Wino when he and his siblings visited the INQUIRER offices be-

TRIPLE/ A18

A BLAST FROM THE PAST YEAR

YOUNG and restless officers led by bemedalled graduates of the Philippine Military Academy, Class '95 stage an uprising on July 27 at the Oakwood Premier Hotel in Makati City to demand for reforms in the Armed Forces and accuse some top brass of corruption.

EMBARRASSING escape: Indonesian Jemaa Islamiyah terrorist suspect Fathur Al-Ghozi bolts jail inside police headquarters in the middle of Metro Manila in July. Three months later, he is killed allegedly in an encounter with gov't troops.

BROKEN promises, especially that one about not running in 2004.

(Top photo) SCANDAL of the year involved the First Gentleman, Mr. Mike Arroyo, said to be the President's heaviest burden. His brother Ignacio comes to the rescue claiming to be Jose Pidal.

IF IT'S OCT. 18, this must be Manila. Preparations for the much-awaited overnight state visit of US President George W. Bush turns Metro Manila upside down but President Macapagal makes a most gracious and accommodating host.

GOODBYE to all that: Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila for 29 years, and whose political influence galvanized Edsa I and II, retires on his 75th birthday on Aug.27.

WHILE no one was looking, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is impeached, engineered in the House of Representatives by second generation pols identified with Eduardo Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition. Public opinion saves day for SC.

'TWAS a few days before Christmas when a denuded landscape was swamped by nature's fury in Southern Leyte, Surigao City, Agusan del Sur and del Norte. The total death toll from the mudslides: 193.

THIS is for real: Movie king Fernando Poe Jr. egged on by his long-time "pareng" Erap and millions of signatures from his fans files his certificate of candidacy last Friday as a presidential candidate.

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada is not out of the political equation even after two years in detention. Consider him the man behind the once reluctant presidential candidate FPJ now gunning for the highest post.

PRIDE in being Filipino—so badly damaged—is restored, thanks to Manny Pacquiao who defeats former World Boxing Council champ, Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera, one of the world's best featherweight fighters.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Party cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Roxas	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Partly cloudy
Laoag	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with rains
Tagaytay	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with rains
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with rains
Calapan	Partly cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

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Trader, opposition to FPJ: Show us

By Martin P. Marfil and Cynthia D. Balana

THE HEAD of the influential Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) yesterday questioned the ability of movie star Fernando Poe Jr. to unite the country.

Poe, who is the presidential candidate of a major opposition coalition, has not laid out his plans on how he intends to unite the various contending forces in the country up to this time, said Ecop president Donald Dee.

"It's a popular team but we need to have a clearer idea of their platform and programs," Dee said in a phone interview.

The business leader said he would like to know Poe's economic platform, his program of governance and where he stood on various issues like population control, foreign relations, the budget, globalization and labor.

"Nothing is clear ... I would like to know how he intends to pull the country together. He's been saying that he wants unity but this is not unity. This is a battle between Edsa I and II forces versus Edsa III," Dee said.

"We don't know what he wants. It's a big gamble ... people want change but how does he intend to go about making changes?" he added.

Dee's remarks came a day after Poe, his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda and some of the senatorial candidates in his slate filed their certificates of candidacy at the Commission on Elections under the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, a newly formed coalition of three opposition parties.

Dee said the inclusion of Legarda, an apparent overture to the anti-Estrada constituency, did not change anything.

"Some politicians are opportunistic. [They have their own] personal agenda, that is why they are in the opposition or in the administration," he said, noting that former Sen. Orlando Mercado, Estrada's defense secretary, has been included in the administration line-up.

Dee admitted that he has not talked to Poe, and that he had been a "bit" vocal against Poe's plans to run for president.

"I said three months ago that they should not let him run because he is an unknown entity," he said, adding that he proposed this to opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara months ago.

Poe's ability to unite the country was also questioned by leaders of the ruling Lakas-CMD party who yesterday stepped up their attacks against the popular star, saying Poe would not be able to unite the country 'and had in fact divided the opposition.

House Assistant Majority Leader Peter Allan Cayetano, Bulacan Rep. Wilfrido Villarama and Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco said Poe has not presented tangible measures to achieve his promise to bring about national unity.

They doubted Poe would be able to bring Muslim secessionists and communist rebels to the negotiation table because of his lack of political experience and a clear platform of government.

Syjuco said he was confident the voters would display political maturity and exercise good judgment when choosing deserving candidates.

"Let us not be easily deceived by candidates with empty promises of national unity when they have no prior experience and platform for such a gargantuan task as the presidency," Syjuco said.

Syjuco insisted that President Macapagal-Arroyo was still the best choice because of her competence, leadership and experience.

Cayetano said that Poe, having divided the opposition, would also divide the people.

"When asked what his platform was, Poe replied that someone was already preparing it. This sends a clear and disturbing signal about the state of a Poe presidency," he said.

Cayetano pointed out that a clear program of action, not good character, was what was needed to send Poe to Malacañang.

"Mr. Poe may be sincere but he would be sincerely wrong," he said.

Villarama said that Poe may not realize that the presidency was entirely different from show business and that one needed to be fully armed with experience, vision, performance and competence to lead the country in the right direction.

"Poe gives false hopes, confusing people by making them believe that running a country is similar to a movie script where the writer could easily end the story with a plot where people would live happily ever after," he said.

KNP says Palace pressuring Comelec to change decision

THE OPPOSITION Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) yesterday accused Malacañang of putting pressure on the Commission on Elections to reverse its decision in the dispute between two rival factions of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), one of the component parties of the coalition.

In a press statement, the KNP said it had received information that the Comelec had reached a consensus to recognize the LDP chair, Sen. Edgardo Angara, as the sole LDP official authorized to name the party's candidates in the May polls, and was ready to hand down such a ruling this week.

The LDP's Angara wing is locked in a dispute with the wing headed by LDP secretary general Rep. Butz Aquino over which faction the Comelec would recognize as having the authority to nominate candidates. The Aquino faction had chosen Sen. Ping Lacson for its presidential candidate.

LDP spokesperson Miguel Romero claimed that Malacañang, having learned of the consensus, was "apparently applying pressure tactics on the poll body to reverse its decision, in a despicable attempt to sow chaos within the mainstream opposition and torpedo the imminent poll victory of the united opposition ticket led by its standard bearer Fernando Poe Jr."

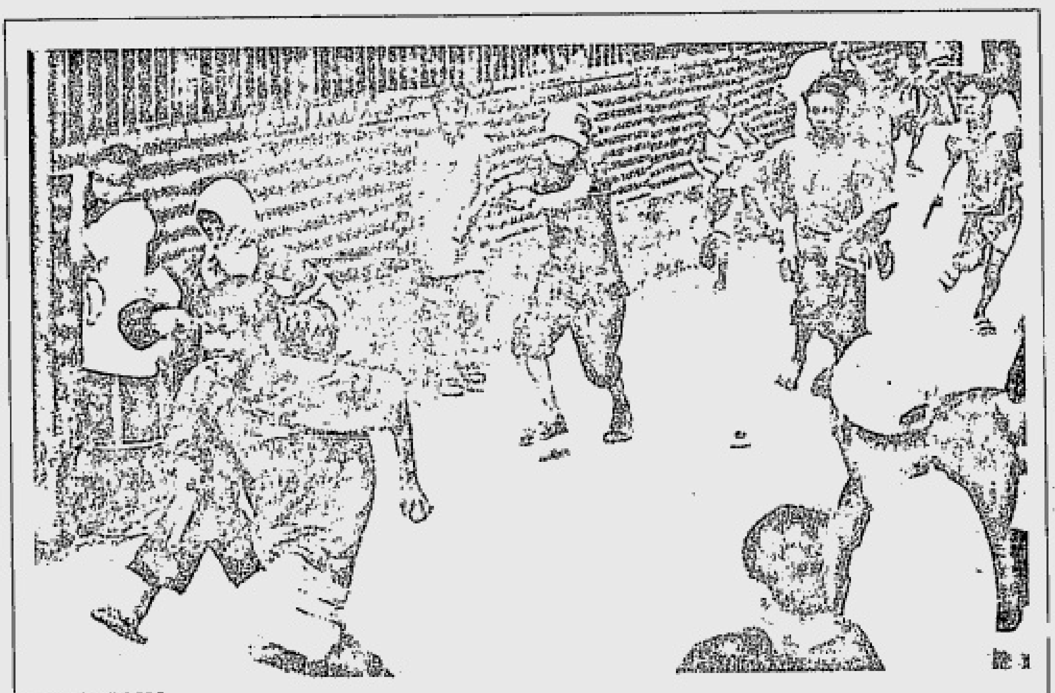
"This report, if true, smacks of a blatant attempt by the Palace to meddle in the affairs of, and impose its sinister agenda upon, an independent constitutional office," Romero said.

Citing sources in the Comelec , Romero said Palace political operatives have been pressuring the Comelec leadership to dump its pro-Angara decision and instead recognize the authority of both Angara and Aquino.

The Comelec is due to meet Monday to rule on the LDP dispute.

In the same statement, Romero said the Palace wanted the poll body to use a 1949 Supreme Court ruling that upheld the power of two feuding Liberal Party factions—the Avelino and Quirino wings—to pick their respective bets under the same LP banner.

Romero said this SC ruling did not apply in the LDP case.



GUN FUN

No, it's not a gang war, but teenagers at play in Payatas, Quezon City. Toy guns received last Christmas look realistic enough that they could be mistaken for the real thing. RUDY ESPERAS

PRESIDENT Macapagal administers to oath to Laguna Gov. Teresita Ningning Lazaro who became the ruling Lakas-CMD party's newest member yesterday. PCPO/MALACANANG

Gloria takes credit for Pinoy's optimism

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WITH LESS than five months to go before the elections and still lagging behind in the surveys, President Macapagal-Arroyo is frantically trying to boost her political stock by claiming credit for almost every bit of positive news.

Yesterday, Ms Macapagal claimed credit for the optimism that majority of Filipinos said they felt for the new year.

"According to a popular survey group, majority of our citizens face the new year with a lot of optimism. Thank God. I hope it signals the strong start that I have achieved in the short period of time that I have been President," Ms Macapagal said in her weekly radio message.

The President claimed that she has turned the economy around and stabilized the political uncertainty that she inherited.

Ms Macapagal, who will file her certificate of candidacy tomorrow as the administration's presidential standard-bearer, said she had been fighting for change for the ordinary Filipino.

"Even the strength of our foreign policy provides foreign countries the confidence to invest in our country to create jobs and raise the salaries of our wage-earners," she said.

Ms Macapagal noted that under her leadership, US President George W. Bush visited the Philippines and made the country a major US ally. She noted that the Philippines also won a seat in the United Nations Security Council.

"This gives us additional protection for our OFWs (overseas Filipino workers)," she said.

She said her government extended free overseas telephone calls for families of OFWs in Iraq during the US-led war against the regime of Saddam Hussein.

She said that with Saddam's capture, the Iraqi economy can be immediately rehabilitated with US allies like the Philippines expected to get a share in the jobs and contracts to be generated there.

Ms Macapagal claimed that it was during her two-and-a-half year stint as president that an unprecedented housing program had been achieved, as well as the fight against corruption and in providing health care through Philhealth for the people.

"This is a down payment and I won't be contented. We should have universal health insurance or all families should be covered by Philhealth in the coming years," she said.

Ms Macapagal said the half-price reduction in the prices of medicines in government hospitals was another "down payment" of her administration.

GMA justifies pro-choice gov't population policy

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday defended her pro-choice policy on population control even as the number of Filipinos threatened to breach the 84-million mark this year.

"The population issue has a fundamental impact on development and we are implementing a family planning program based on moral choice," the President said in a statement.

Ms Macapagal said the government must also focus on enlarging the economic pie so that more Filipinos could avail of their rightful share of the national bounty.

To achieve this, the President said, there should be more investments, jobs and "better tools for people to succeed."

"We have to change the economy and the political system to fight poverty," she said.

The President, who is running for a full six-year term in May, said there were more things she wanted to do.

"We have done much in a short span of time and we can do more with more reforms, reconciliation and the people's support," she said.

While the President dropped her opposition to the death penalty recently, she has continued to toe the line of the Catholic Church which opposes the use of artificial family planning methods.

The Population Commission has reported that the country's population grows by 2.36 percent every year, one of the highest rates in Asia, with 1.6 million to 2 million Filipinos expected to be added this year to the current population of 82 million.

PopCom executive director Tomas Osias warned that if left unchecked, the country's population would breach the 84 million mark this year and could swell to 170 million in less than 30 years.

Osias urged candidates in next May's elections to spell out their platform concerning population growth.

The birth rate should be a top concern of politicians running in next May's presidential election because of its effect on an economy already burdened with corruption, he said.

"What we can say is whoever will win this election should address the population-management concern because it has a very big impact on our economic development, food security, health, education, environment, housing," Osias said.

Meanwhile, more families are falling below the poverty line, defined as an income of P50 a day.

An estimated 40 percent of Filipinos lived below the poverty level in 2003, up from 38 percent in 2001, the commission said.

"We can see that the families living below the poverty line are increasing every year," deputy PopeCom executive director Mia Ventura said.

The rising population adds to the government's difficulty in paying for development projects, and so tends to keep the country poor.

The commission urged presidential aspirants to come up with policies to curb the birth rate.

Philippine governments have avoided taking aggressive policies to curb the birth rate, fearing a collision with the powerful Catholic church, which condemns contraceptive devices as immoral. About 85 percent of Filipinos are Catholic. *With Reuters report*

Caltex, Flying V raise prices

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TWO MORE oil firms, Caltex Philippines Inc. and Flying V, yesterday raised the pump prices of their diesel fuel by 30 centavos per liter to recover the higher cost of making cleaner diesel in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

Oil giants Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. led the price increase at midnight of Friday.

Under the Clean Air Act, oil companies should only sell automotive diesel that contain not more than 0.05 percent sulfur by volume starting Jan.1 this year. The previous maximum was 0.2 percent sulfur content.

Other independent oil firms said they have not yet made the decision to follow suit, but were expected to do so. Seaoil Philippines said it might raise its diesel prices today.

Oil executives said the actual cost of cleaner diesel was between 30 centavos and 50 centavos per liter.

Petron, Shell and Caltex, however, will maintain their discount programs for public transport groups by pegging their diesel prices at P15.50 per liter at selected outlets in Metro Manila.

Petron said that nine of its stations in Metro Manila were offering discounts while Caltex had 11 such stations.

An industry source said retail prices of diesel was about P17.10 a liter, which means the discount amounts to about P1.60 per liter.

Oil executives said a full round of price increases for all petroleum products—including diesel, gasoline and kerosene—was "highly possible" in January owing to fluctuations in traditional price indicators.

"Current trends in the movement of the Mean of Platts Singapore or Mops show that we should raise prices by 40-50 centavos per liter," an oil official said. Mops is used as the benchmark price for finished oil products.

But other officials stressed that no decision has been made on an across-the-board price hike.

Check in earlier, air travelers told

AUTHORITIES on Saturday ordered passengers flying out of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to check in earlier in order to undergo stepped-up security checks as President Macapagal-Arroyo backed severe aviation measures imposed by the United States.

Outbound passengers on all international flights must "add 30 minutes for them to be able to catch their flights," said airport general manager Ed Manda in a radio broadcast.

"The usual three-hour (check-in requirement) will be adjusted to three-and-a-half hours," he said. "The security checks will be twice as strict as before."

Washington on Monday issued an emergency directive asking all foreign carriers to place armed sky marshals on flights deemed by US officials to be at risk of possible terror attack.

In the past two weeks, seven US-bound flights have been cancelled and others escorted to US airports by F-16 fighter jets amid fears of a terrorist attack. *(See related story on Page A8)*

"The US may have sound basis to heighten its alert and we shall continue to keep our own vigilance at all levels," President Macapagal said in a statement.

"We have been spared from terrorist attacks in recent months and this is a result of unrelenting law enforcement operations against terrorist cells, isolating them through the peace process (with indigenous Muslim guerrilla groups), and community alertness," she added.

"On all counts, we shall never lower our guard,"she said.

A day earlier, Ms Macapagal said her government was "prepared to deploy air marshals on Philippine Airlines planes entering US territory as requested."

Col. Andres Caro, head of the Aviation Security Group, said the Philippines has "trained officers to do this job but we are waiting for the go-signal from Malacañang."

PAL spokesperson Rolando Estabillo declined to comment. *AFP*

Lobregat, Zamboanga's first woman mayor, dies at 82

By Rolly A. San Juan and Julie S. Alipala

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Ma. Clara Lorenzo Lobregat, Zamboanga City's first woman mayor, died Friday after suffering cardiac arrest. She was 82.

Lobregat was pronounced dead by attending physicians at the Manila Medical Center at 11:53 p.m. on Friday, after she had been confined since Dec. 27 for a fever.

News of the death of 'Tita Caling' as she was known to Zamboangueños stunned residents of this City who considered Lobregat as the city's symbol of courage and unity.

Yesterday, residents here wore black armbands as a sign of mourning. All AM radio stations in the city played the mayor's song (she recorded it herself) "Mi Ciudad de Zamboanga (My City of Zamboanga)."

Lobregat is survived by her seven children: Remedios, Concepcion, Celso who is the city's congressman, Pablo, Jose, Lourdes and Jerome.

Her remains will be brought to Zamboanga City this afternoon and will be flown back to Manila on Tuesday.

"We lost our mother and it is very painful for all of us here, we thought she was coping well with her fever. Her death comes as a surprise to all of us," Representative Lobregat said in a telephone interview.

The mayor had complained of on-and-off fever on Dec. 26, prompting her to consult her three physicians in Manila.

Representative Lobregat said his mother was admitted to the hospital on Dec. 27 after the doctors advised her to take a rest because "her white blood cells (WBC) and red blood cells (RBC) were very low."

After she took her medication, Celso said, her fever went down. "We thought she would recover soon, stay up and well."

Since her RBC and WBC were getting lower, Celso said, her doctors decided on a transfusion.

On Friday morning, Celso said, the mayor received the first blood transfusion, "and she was then well, she even signed some papers."

But the second blood transfusion at around 10 p.m. Friday was not as successful as the mayor suffered palpitations, which led to cardiac arrest.

At around 3 p.m. Friday, the mayor signed her supposed acceptance certificate of nomination to seek for reelection under the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

LOBREGAT

Celso said his mother, who was seeking a third term as mayor, was supposed to file her certificate of candidacy on Jan. 5.

Celso said that up to her last breath, the mayor was thinking of returning to Zamboanga.

"She was insistent to go home because she had lots of work to finish."

Lobregat was the second Zamboanga City mayor to die while in office. The first was the legendary Cesar Climaco who was assassinated by an unknown gunman on Nov. 14, 1984.

Lobregat was born on April 26, 1921 in Zamboanga City to Pablo Lorenzo and Luisa Rafols. At the age of 24, she married Celso Lobregat Sr. on Jan. 30, 1945.

Lobregat attended three Catholic schools, Pilar College, Maryknoll and St. Scholastica's. Her political career began in 1970 she was elected Zamboanga's delegate to the Constitutional Convention. In 1987, she was elected representative of Zamboanga City and was reelected twice, in 1992 and 1995. In 1998, she was elected mayor and was reelected in 2001.

What endeared Mayor Lobregat to the predominantly Christian residents of the city was her steadfast opposition to Zamboanga's joining the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the Southern Philippines Council for Progress and Development (SPCPD).

Zamboanga City residents voted overwhelmingly in three referenda against the city's inclusion in ARMM and SPCPD.

Mayor Lobregat's battle cry in the Chavacano dialect to the city's residents in her appeal for unity and cooperation was "man hunto-hunto kita," translated in Chavacano as "let's stay together always."

Foreign experts to aid NBI probe of Villaruel death

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation is set to interview foreign security experts who could tell it whether former Air Transportation Office chief Panfilo Villaruel posed a grave danger to incoming planes when he took over the Ninoy Aquino International Airport control tower in November last year.

Villaruel and an aide, Lt. (s.g.) Rodolfo Catchillar, were killed in a hail of gunfire after a police Swat team stormed the control tower to retake it.

Villaruel had said he staged the takeover to express his frustration over the dismal situation the country was in.

Sources privy to the investigation said the NBI would ask the foreign experts if the airport management could have done things differently to ensure the safety of incoming flights at the height of the takeover.

One source said the NBI will ask the security officials if the backup control tower, which the airport management was mandated to put up, would have been enough to ensure the safety of the flights.

If so, then the primary control tower could have been shut down and the authorities could have waited out Villaruel and Catchillar, the source said.

According to the source, the NBI had been told that the developments in the air control tower would have imperiled flights only a certain distance away, which meant that the takeover by Villaruel and Catchillar was not as critical as initially thought.

In all, the NBI will be talking to some 20 witnesses in connection with the control tower siege and the deaths of Villaruel and Catchillar.

Estrada to present defense via 'docu'

By Armand N. Nocum

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada is set to release this month a documentary showing that he is innocent of the plunder and graft charges filed against him and that he was a victim of political persecution hatched by Edsa II forces.

"This documentary will contain my point-by-point rebuttal of the charges I am accused of before the Sandiganbayan," Estrada told the INQUIRER in an interview.

Speaking from his detention quarters at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, Estrada said the documentary would show that the prosecution, which rested its case against him last year, had "no evidence" to back up its charges.

Estrada stands accused of collecting P254 million from jueteng operators, receiving P189 million in commissions from government financial and gaming deals, getting P130 million from tobacco excise taxes, and accumulating as much as P3.2 million from other alleged illegal sources and placing them in a dummy account under the name Jose Velarde.

He is also accused of starting the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation allegedly as a front for laundering illegal proceeds into which he deposited more than P200 million.

"What was not presented in court will be brought directly to the Filipino people," Estrada said, adding that he had new testimony and evidence to back up his claim of innocence.

He said he hoped to release the tape before he leaves for the United States where the Sandiganbayan has allowed him to travel to undergo knee replacement surgery.

A close Estrada aide, however, admitted that the documentary could bring back the acrimony between supporters of the ousted leader and those believed to have caused his downfall.

"When the documentary is released, it will open up wounds resulting from Edsa II and the animosity nurtured by key players and participants of Edsa Tres," according to Ferdie Ramos, one of those who worked on the documentary.

With passions flaring anew between Edsa II and Edsa III forces with the advent of the election season, Ramos admitted the documentary could greatly affect the campaigns of Edsa II players who are now running in the opposition camp.

Ramos tagged Sen. Loren Legarda and ex-Sen. Ernesto Herrera, who are running for vice president and senator, respectively, with the opposition party, as the "main engineers" of Estrada's ouster.

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Loren: I truly understand how they feel

By Michael Lim Ubac

"IN GOD'S own time we will all be united." Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda, the vice presidential candidate of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, yesterday offered a hand of reconciliation to supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Legarda said she was willing to "reach out" to everyone, particularly pro-Estrada supporters who object to a Fernando Poe Jr.-Legarda team-up for the May polls.

"I truly understand how they feel. I'm willing to talk to them in the spirit of reconciliation," said Legarda, who took pains to explain that her team-up with the movie actor was the only ticket that could unify a divided country.

"We offer a unifying and healing ticket," she said.

Legarda called up the INQUIRER herself after the KNP rejected the demand of some pro-Estrada supporters that she apologize for her role in Estrada's ouster in January 2001.

"We feel that there is no need to issue any apology," said Rod Reyes, KNP media adviser, who said he was speaking for both the opposition coalition and its standard-bearer.

Reyes explained that Estrada himself had recognized Poe's privilege to choose his own candidate for vice president. "Even (former) President Joseph Estrada already respected FPJ's decision to choose Senator Legarda as his running mate."

Bury the hatchet

Reyes said that "whatever positions people took during Edsa II" were based on their convictions at the time and thus should not be taken against them.

"What we need now is unification and healing," he said, explaining that Poe's choice of Legarda was "part of this effort."

Reyes appealed to Estrada supporters to "bury the hatchet and join forces" with the KNP in demolishing President Macapagal-Arroyo's bid to gain a full six-year term in 2004.

He said that now, more than ever, it was incumbent upon oppositionists to set aside personal enmity so that they could dislodge Ms Macapagal from power.

He did not discount the possibility that the anti-Legarda drive was part of an orchestrated move to divide the opposition. "We feel that this is really part of such efforts to split the opposition."

Legarda defended

Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III, Poe's campaign manager, also rushed to defend Legarda, saying "the FPJ-Loren tandem is a good mix of youth and experience, idealism and reality."

Sotto described Legarda as a distinguished legislator and majority floor leader, having introduced and sponsored major legislation in the past five and a half years.

"The KNP team is a political blockbuster that we know the people will support. The PPA issue is not a setback for Sen. Loren Legarda who is known for her independence of mind. Based on her recent pronouncements, she now understands my objections against the Epira law," Sotto said, referring to the controversial Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

Sotto predicted that objections to an FPJ-Legarda tandem and the non-inclusion of San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada in the KNP's senatorial ticket would dissipate in a few days.

"As for Mr. Jinggoy Estrada's non-inclusion in the Senate slate, the Sandiganbayan case against him will always put a tentativeness to his term as senator in case he wins. The rest of the Senate slate represent various social and regional sectors of the country. Any initial uneasiness with the choices will dissipate in a few days as understanding sets in," Sotto concluded.

Muslim support

Muslim leaders were hopeful about the FPJ-Loren tandem because the two understand the plight of the Muslims in Mindanao and will surely look after their interest, said Amina Rasul, former presidential adviser for the youth during the Ramos administration and former World Bank consultant.

Rasul, daughter of former Sen. Santanina Rasul, joined the senatorial slate of Poe and Legarda because "Muslims know that the KNP will push programs that will benefit the Muslims and push peace in the Southern Philippines."

"The people in Mindanao will vote for FPJ and Loren because they understand how the people there, particularly the Muslims, feel and what they want. FPJ portrayed roles of a Muslim fighter in his movies. He undoubtedly knows how Muslims feel and that is why Mr. Poe is well-loved by the Muslim people."

She added that Legarda had also been adopted a Muslim princess because of her concern for the Muslim people.

Commissioner Taha M. Basman of the Philippine Islamic Council welcomed Legarda's decision to run as Poe's running mate.

In a separate statement, Milagros Chavez, provincial representative of the Fishermen's Federation for Regional Management Council (FARMC), said the agriculture sector would get a big boost if Legarda were elected vice president.

"Loren has shown her concern for the agricultural sector by pushing legislation that will improve agricultural productivity when she was in the Senate," Chavez said.

Chavez added that agriculture is an important sector of the economy. "We need somebody like Loren in the top echelons of our leadership so she could push for programs that will improve our agricultural productivity as she did in the Senate," she said.

Lakas still has to fill up Senate slate

From page A1

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Lakas-CMD president, confirmed that Hussin was "99 percent most likely" to be among the 12 candidates.

De Venecia said Hussin was the "most prestigious" Muslim leader, recognized both here and abroad. He noted that Hussin was the incumbent chair of the Moro National Liberation Front and its representative in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Ready by midnight

De Venecia also promised that the full Senate slate would be ready by midnight tonight or early tomorrow.

Asked why the administration could not yet complete its slate, De Venecia said: "Because we have so many applications."

He said 16 names were being considered for the 12-member slate.

Asked to name names, De Venecia identified those already known to be senatorial aspirants or who have already decided against it: Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Interior Secretary Jose Lina, anti-kidnapping czar Angelo Reyes and presidential adviser Heherson Alvarez.

Another Lakas official said there were negotiations with Sen. John Osmeña to join the administration slate.

Noynoy undecided?

De Venecia also said Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, only son of former President Corazon Aquino and the late opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., was a "very strong candidate for the Senate."

He admitted that Aquino, a member of the Liberal Party, wanted to seek reelection, but expressed confidence that the decision wasn't final yet.

Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, campaign spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, claimed that "as of yesterday, we already have more than a full ticket but the committee in charge of finalizing the Senate slate will (still) be validating all the names."

Press Secretary Milton Alingod attributed the delay to the "many candidates being considered."

HUSSIN: Marching orders from Malacañang to run for Senate.
EDWIN BACASMAS

BIAZON: Palace still courting him to join Lakas.
JESS YUSON

Thus far, only nine candidates have been identified by different officials: actors Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Pampanga Gov. Lito Lapid; reelectionist senators Robert Barbers and Robert Jaworski; former Trade Secretary Mar Roxas, Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, ex-Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado; Alvarez and lawyer Pia Cayetano, the daughter of the late Sen. Renato Cayetano. Hussin is the 10th candidate.

Reconsideration

Lina and Reyes had earlier been considered for the Senate slate but they decided not to run. Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon was also on the short list but reportedly had yet to agree.

De Venecia said Reyes withdrew from the race earlier because he was "not rating" well, but that "all of a sudden he is strong again because of his victories in the anti-kidnapping campaign." He said Lina was also being asked to reconsider his decision not to run.

Raiding parties

To meet the deadline, the administration is raiding other parties, the INQUIRER was told.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who is on leave from the opposition LDP party and is running with ex-Sen. Raul Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-asa, said Malacañang was continuing to court him.

"*Iyang mga ligaw-ligaw, noon pa yan* (The wooing has been going on for some time)," said Biazon, who was contacted by the INQUIRER through his mobile phone while he was filing his certificate of candidacy for senator at the Commission on Elections yesterday afternoon.

Offers for Biazon

Asked whether Lakas emissaries had been asking him to jump to the Palace ticket, he said: "*Meron pa rin* (There are still offers)."

The opposition coalition also accused the President's camp of raiding the Poe ticket.

"The Palace is trying to pirate some of our candidates," said Sen. Vicente Sotto III, campaign manager of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Although he did not name names, it was apparent that he was referring to Sen. John Osmeña, ex-Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and former Sen. Ernesto "Boy" Herrera.

A reliable source in the KNP told the INQUIRER that President Macapagal-Arroyo's political strategists have been courting the reelectionist senator and the two others who are making a comeback bid for a Senate seat in the May polls.

But Sotto did admit that the KNP's senatorial ticket was not yet "totally closed."

He said that other senatorial aspirants—former Sen. Ernesto Maceda, Rep. Sonny Escudero, ex-Sen. Nikki Coseteng and former Ambassador Roy Señeres—could still make it to the ticket if Marcos or House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla decide to seek reelection or leave the KNP slate.

Sort things out

Estrada said Imee Marcos, the eldest daughter of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, needed to sort things out.

"*Naguguluhan daw siya sa mga bagay-bagay* (She said she was confused about certain things)," Estrada told the INQUIRER, adding that Imee has instead decided to run for reelection.

The ex-President's remarks confirmed a disclosure by two administration politicians that Marcos was running for a third term.

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) and Secretary Jose Ma. "Joey" Rufino, executive director of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, said Marcos will seek reelection in Ilocos Norte under the banner of the Marcos party Kilusang Bagong Lipunan and in alliance with the administration Lakas party.

Marcos didn't respond to calls on her mobile phone.

KBL-Lakas alliance

Rufino said Marcos's brother, Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, called him yesterday to say that the Marcos family had met and decided that his sister shouldn't push through with her Senate plans.

Marcos's widow Imelda was part of the family meeting, Rufino said.

Rufino said: "The Marcos family appreciates the help being extended to Ilocos by President Macapagal."

"They find such arrangement as fine (hence) the need for a KBL-Lakas alliance in Ilocos," he added. "Bongbong said we should have this alliance all the way in 2004."

Pichay was in the same room with Rufino when the latter received Bongbong's call late afternoon yesterday.

Certificates filed

Aside from Biazon, other senatorial candidates who filed their certificates of candidacy yesterday were Barbers and Jaworski.

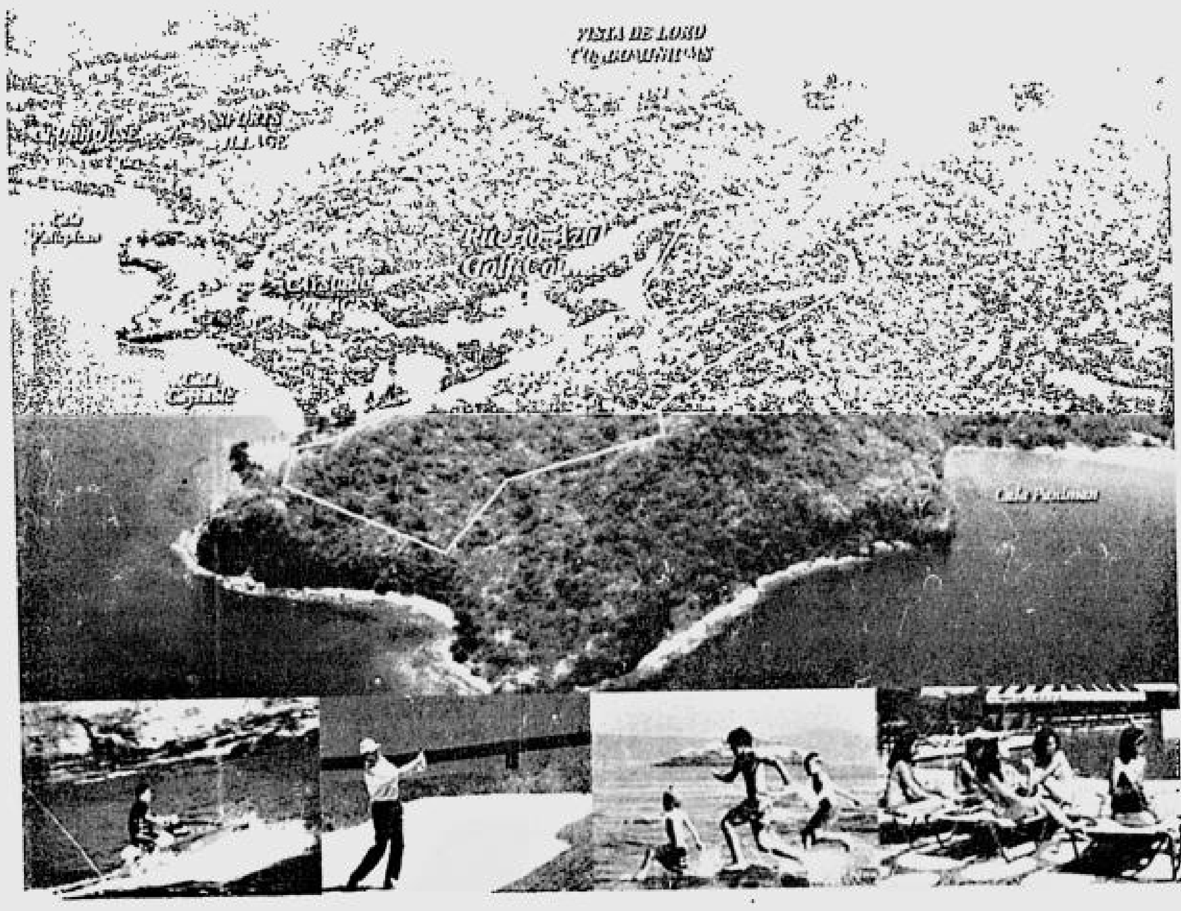
Jaworski's certificate was submitted by his son, Dudut, while Barbers filed his own.

Herrera sent an aide to submit his certification.

The deadline for filing COCs is tomorrow.

Aside from Biazon, Roco's own slate includes seven other candidates: former solicitor general Frank Chavez and former securities chief Perfecto Yasay Jr., who are both running for the Senate for the second time; former National Food Authority chair Edno Joson, broadcaster Jay Sonza, bowling champion Bong Coo and lawyers Mel "Batas" Mauricio and Nicanor Gatmaytan, who is blind.

Roco had also invited the daughters of former President Fidel Ramos and the late Sen. Rene Cayetano to join his senatorial slate. ***With reports from Martin Marfil, Dona Pazzibugan, Cynthia Balana***



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SM's Henry Sy buying 29% SSS stake in E-PCIBank

From page A1

Government Service Insurance System controls about 6 percent.

The balance of Equitable-PCIB shares is held by the family of Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, a brother of Imelda Marcos, which holds one board seat, institutional investors and the public.

The proposed purchase price is below the P90 to P96 per share that the two state-run pension funds, the SSS and the GSIS, paid for the hostile takeover of PCIBank by Equitable Bank in 1999.

PEACe bonds

But banking sources said Banco de Oro will pay SSS with government-issued PEACe bonds, which at the redemption date, would result in the SSS and GSIS posting no accounting loss for the entire transaction.

Despite the accounting safeguards provided by the PEACe bonds, "the purchase price may be adjusted upwards if the Banco de Oro group acquires additional blocs of shares of Equitable-PCIBank through a negotiated purchase within six months at a price higher than the agreed effective price," the disclosure added.

But with the sizeable bloc to be acquired from the SSS, BDO would see no immediate need to buy additional shares, such as those held by the GSIS, industry sources said.

In an interview with the INQUIRER late Friday, SSS president Cora de la Paz said the pension fund had decided to sell its Equitable-PCIBank stake to improve its investment returns.

HENRY SY: Taipan starts new year with a big bang.

"Our exposure in the bank is big, about 10 percent of our total reserve funds, and so we want to diversify. After four years, we have yet to get any return on our investment. SSS is not prepared to put in any more funds to help the bank so our assessment is it's better to have a strong party come in and work with the bank," De la Paz said.

Dela Paz said she believed that BDO had a good synergy with Equitable-PCIbank and that the stockholders would be able to work well together.

She said the SSS was not only selling for the sake of selling but to help create a stronger banking institution.

"The entry of BDO will help Equitable-PCIBank face the problems of the future in a much better position. This is a good matchup," she said.

With Erap's help

The SSS and the GSIS became the biggest shareholder of Equitable-PCIBank after the Estrada administration allowed the use of government-run pension funds to help the Go family of Equitable Bank acquire the controlling 72 percent stake in the much bigger PCIBank for the sum of P32 billion in 1999.

The merger catapulted the combined Equitable-PCIBank to the country's second biggest bank in terms of assets. (It slid to third place when the Bank of the Philippine Islands bought Far East Bank and Trust Co.)

The SSS-GSIS stake in the combined Equitable-PCIBank adds up to about 35 percent.

Only a year after the merger, when Equitable-PCIBank was dragged into the Jose Velarde scandal that resulted in a massive bank run, the SSS was publicly urging the Go family to join the state-run pension funds and sell their combined shareholdings as a bloc.

The sale proposal was, however, overtaken by the second Edsa people power uprising that resulted in President Estrada being overthrown.

Strong strategic partner

The central bank, which had to help Equitable PCI Bank with billions in funding assistance when it was hit by a heavy bank run, has been prodding the bank to take in a strong strategic partner.

Only last April, in acknowledgment of the bank's weak shareholder structure and vulnerability to raiders, Equitable-PCIBank approved a new tender offer rule that would make takeover attempts more expensive.

The tender offer rule requires the acquirer to disclose the purchase and offer the same premium and price paid for the bloc to all shareholders as well.

If the tender offer rule would be uniformly applied, the Sy purchase price could balloon to P60 billion and higher for the 100-percent control of E-PCIB.

According to a GSIS official, GSIS president Winston Garcia had been aware of the negotiations between the SSS and Sy but would rather let SSS take the captain's seat considering the much smaller exposure of the GSIS in the bank.

Lower than book value

De la Paz said she was happy with the agreed valuation albeit it was lower than book value.

"We're getting a premium which we believe is good for a bank, compared to premiums paid in other transactions, this is already the highest that shall be paid for a bank over the previous years," Del a Paz said, noting that pricing for bank shares were still generally depressed as the industry was still saddled with hefty non-performing loans and real and other properties owned and acquired (ropoas).

She said the SSS would be using the proceeds from the transaction to invest in a variety of high-yielding and safe investment instruments.

Analysts said the local stock market would benefit in terms of increased liquidity if some of the proceeds were diverted to equities especially since interest rates on fixed income instruments were low.

Unloading

Asked whether the SSS was keen on selling its shares in other listed companies, De la Paz said: "If there's a good offer and that there's a good value, other than just good returns, we'll always be open. We'd like to make sure that our actions will improve the economy."

With the SSS now unloading its stake, the BDO is being given the chance to replicate Equitable Bank's feat of acquiring a controlling stake in a much bigger bank.

This time, however, the cash-awash SM Group is undertaking the takeover without external support. While BDO itself cannot fund the acquisition, industry sources said the bank's shareholders would provide the financial muscle.

Both SSS and BDO are now processing the documentation needed to close the deal. The transaction is still subject to approval by the board of directors of the BDO group, confirmation of the resolution by the Social Security Commission, and approval by the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and other regulatory agencies.

3rd acquisition

BDO, which debuted on the Philippine Stock Exchange last year, has been rapidly expanding over the past few years. This will be the bank's third acquisition in a span of two years.

In October 2002, it bought First e-Bank and followed this up with the purchase of the Philippine operations of the Spanish-based Banco Santander in July 2003. With an asset base of P138 billion, BDO currently ranks ninth among the country's biggest banks.

Equitable-PCIBank becomes the third bank where the Sy family has acquired a strategic investment, after BDO and China Banking Corp. Previously, the family owned a stake in Far East Bank and Trust Co. before the latter was sold to BPI.

Analysts have said a merger or consolidation of all these banking interests was imminent.

Pacquiao fans beat up rowdy gatecrasher

BOXING champion Pacquiao

From page A1

Pacquiao, the International Boxing Federation (IBF) super bantamweight champion, and his wife Jinky were on the dance floor at a private birthday party of their friend Teodora Ceta when he was assaulted by a local man, said Senior Police Officer Rodrigo Torrento.

The suspect, identified by police as Reggie Teves, reportedly threw a beer bottle on the dance floor.

The apparently unprovoked attack prompted angry onlookers to go after Teves with their bare fists, Torrento told reporters.

Pacquiao was hit by broken bottle shards but was uninjured in the pre-dawn fracas in Barangay Labangan, police said. None of the suspect's attackers were arrested.

The suspect was apparently drunk, said Senior Police Officer Doroteo Acedo.

Suspect drunk

Earlier reports said the bottle almost hit Jinky who broke into tears. Seeing his wife crying, Pacquiao reportedly charged at Teves and knocked him cold with one punch. Pacquiao has denied punching Teves, saying his companions did it.

When Teves sobered up at the police station, he admitted being an admirer of the boxing champion. Teves has not indicated whether he would file charges against Pacquiao or not.

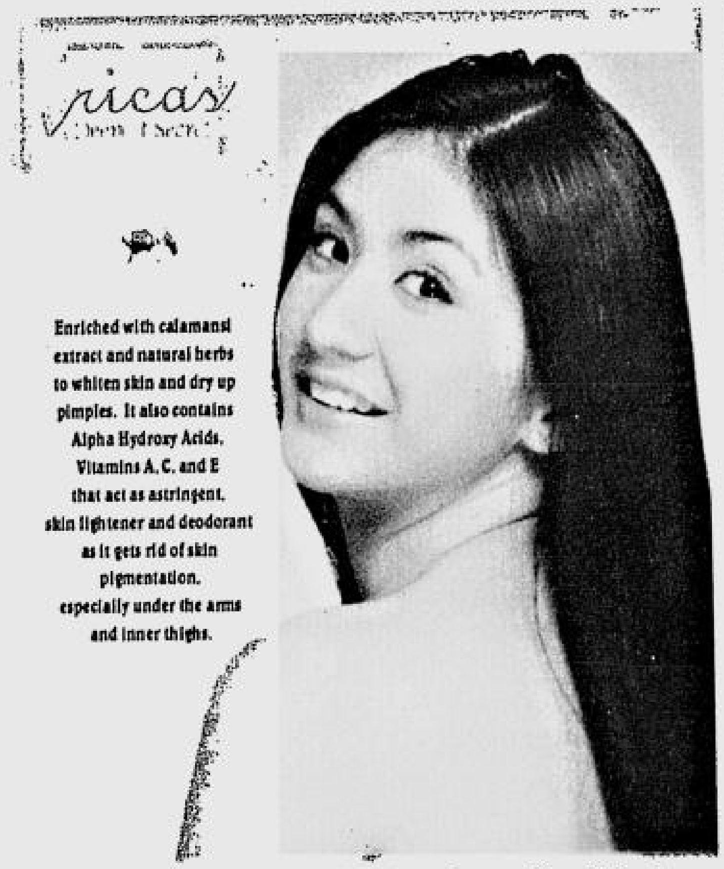
Paid for damages

In June last year, Pacquiao caused a commotion inside a karaoke bar in Gen. Santos City after a bar singer reportedly refused to go out with him.

An enraged Pacquiao broke bottles, smashed a table, and hurled chairs inside the Mamagaya bar and restaurant, according to police.

The bar owner did not file charges against Pacquiao. He told police the boxing champion had already paid for the damages.

Last November, Pacquiao made a sensational impact on the boxing world when he trashed Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera, one of the world's best featherweight fighters, in a non-title bout in San Antonio, Texas. *AFP with report from Alcuin Papa*



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Ombudsman drops raps vs Liban

By Nini Valera

A FORMER director general of the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (Tesda) has been cleared by the Ombudsman of graft charges filed against him by an association of talent recruiters.

The Ombudsman also dismissed nine graft cases filed against Dante V. Liban by entertainers bound for Japan.

In its resolution, the Ombudsman's office found that Liban had not acted with "manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence" or to have given "unwarranted benefit, advantage or preference to any party" during his tenure at the helm of Tesda.

Liban was appointed governor of the Philippine National Red Cross after resigning from Tesda last April. He said in a statement that he felt "great relief and joy" at the Ombudsman's decision.

LIBAN

Liban was the object of complaints filed by Lorenzo Langomez, president of the Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies Deploying Artists Inc. (Parada) and the Confederated Association of Licensed Entertainment Agencies, and Alfredo Palmiery, Parada chair.

The complainants had accused Liban of furnishing Artist Record Books (ARB) to would-be performers for up to P28,000 each, without requiring the applicants to undergo the required skills testing.

The ARB is a necessary document for entertainers in Japan as it serves as a certification of their skills, expertise and experience. The Japanese government requires Filipino entertainers to have ARBs before they could work in that country.

The Ombudsman also found that the cases filed by the entertainers against Liban had been instigated by Palmierry and his group, saying that this was apparently in "retaliation for the stringent measures and reforms that Liban introduced at Tesda to prevent the prostitution of Filipino women in Japan and other countries."

"The dismissal could not have come at a more propitious time," Liban said, adding that it "completes the full resolution of the legal struggle which started after the Tesda Board Fact Finding Committee in February 2003 found no irregularity in the use of Tesda funds."

Before he was appointed Tesda director general by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Liban was the congressman of the second district of Quezon City. In 2001, he ran for city mayor, but lost to Sonny Belmonte.

Despite UN plea, SC upholds death for 4

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court has upheld the death sentences on four convicts despite a United Nations effort to save them.

The decision came as the government prepares to resume the execution of death row inmates this month.

In a four-page resolution, the high court affirmed the death sentences on Jaime Carpo, Oscar Ibao, Warlito Ibao and Roche Ibao, despite a "decision" from the UN Human Rights Committee that executing them would violate the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Philippines is a signatory.

The UN committee, in a decision denominated as "views," declared that the Philippines was "under obligation to provide the (convicts) with an effective and appropriate remedy, including commutation," and the "automatic imposition" of the death penalty on them by virtue of the Revised Penal Code violated the international covenant and constituted an "arbitrary deprivation of life."

With the UN committee's ruling, the convicts' lawyers from the Free Legal Assistance Group (Flag) Anti-Death Penalty Task Force asked the high court to lower their clients' sentences, issue a writ of habeas corpus for them, and transfer them from death row "to another prison dormitory where there is no threat of execution."

The high court, however, disagreed.

"The petition is bereft of merit.... petitioners' invocation of the covenant is misplaced. They should have addressed their cause to the President who is constitutionally mandated to grant pardon, reprieve or commutation to deserving convicts," the high tribunal said.

The SC also dismissed the petition for habeas corpus, saying that it "is not a remedy to correct the imposition of the death penalty upon the accused."

"It was devised as a speedy and effectual remedy to relieve persons from unlawful restraint," the court said.

"We cannot, in habeas corpus proceedings, review the record in a criminal case after a judgement of conviction has been rendered and the accused started serving the sentence, in order to ascertain whether the facts found by the trial court are in accordance with the evidence, or to pass judgment upon the correctness of its conclusions of law based on facts thus found," the tribunal added.

The convicts were sentenced to death on Jan. 22, 1998 by the Tayug (Pangasinan) Regional Trial Court after they were found guilty of the complex crime of multiple murder with attempted murder.

The lower court's decision was elevated to the SC on automatic review and the tribunal affirmed the RTC ruling, which became final and executory on May 10, 2001.

But Flag lawyers appealed to the UN Human Rights Committee on May 6, 2002, alleging that the Philippine government, in implementing the death penalty law, violated the provision of the international covenant on the right to life.

On May 14, 2002, the committee informed Flag lawyers that it had asked the Philippines "not to carry out the death sentence" while their appeal was being considered by the committee.

On July 8, 2002, the Philippines, through its Permanent Mission to the UN, filed with the committee a note verbale stating that the petitioners' appeal was not in accordance with the country's laws.

Nevertheless, the committee came out with its decision favoring the death convicts.

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One of the famous Internist/Family Medicine Physician/ Pediatrician from San Francisco, California will be here as a note speaker on January 7, 2004 at The Shangri-la Hotel, Makati Philippines
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- He is a member of the San Francisco Medical Society
- Board member of the San Mateo Medical Society
- Diplomate, American Board of Internal medicine
- Diplomate, American Board of Pediatrics
- Member of the U.S. Society of Physician
- He graduated with honor at the University of Rome.
- Professor at the University of California, Davis
His interesting topics are:
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II.) CHOLESTEROL
III.) DIABETES
IV.) FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY PRACTICE.
The conference will start promptly at 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be served. Certificate will be given after the conference. Conference fee for Doctor/Physician for pre-registration will be PHP 2,000 and on site registration is at PHP 2,500. Please call 757-1916/17 for ticket reservations. We only accept cash or cashier's check.
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Office 2000	1:30-5:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb9
(Win2000, Word	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb9
Excel, PowerPoint)	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
P8,000/48hrs			
Program	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Feb09-Feb24
Logic	8:00-5:00	Fri	Jan16-Feb06
Formulation	8:00-5:00	Fri	Feb13-Mar05
P5,000/30hrs	3:30-8:30	Sat	Jan17-Feb29
	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb03
	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb03
	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jan18-Feb08
JAVA Programing	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb05
Fundamentals	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb05
(Module 1)	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Feb16-Mar04
P7,500/36hrs	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Feb16-Mar04
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
	8:00-3:00	Sun	Jan25-Feb29
Application in Java	1:30-4:30	MTF	Jan19-Feb09
(Module2)	3:30-8:30	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
P7,600/30hrs			
DreamWeaver	1:00-5:00	MWF	Feb09-Feb25
P6,000/30hrs	3:30-8:30	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb03
Macromedia Flash	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Jan31
Action Script	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jan19-Jan29
P6,000/24hrs	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan19-Jan29
Using Flash	9:00-12:00	MTThF	Feb02-Feb13
P5,500/24hrs	9:00-12:00	M-TThF	Feb23-Mar05
	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Feb09-Feb19
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Feb14-Feb28
Visual Basic .Net	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb11
Fundamentals	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan19-Feb11
P8,500/45hrs	8:00-5:00	Fri	Jan23-Feb27
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jan25-Feb29
MS Access 2000	5:30-8:30	MTThF	Jan12-Jan30
P6,000/30hrs	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb21
Programming	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jan19-Feb05
in C++	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Feb09-Feb26
P6,500/36hrs	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Feb09-Feb26
	8:00-3:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb20
	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jan25-Feb22
Network	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb04
Technology	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jan12-Feb04
P7,000/45hrs	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb04
	9:00-5:00	Fri	Jan16-Mar05
	9:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Mar06
	9:00-6:00	Sun	Jan18-Mar07
Administering	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan12-Feb04
Windows Networks	1:30-4:30	M-F	Jan12-Feb04
P9,000/54hrs	6:00-9:00	M-F	Jan12-Feb04
	9:00-12:00	M-F	Feb09-Mar06
	1:30-4:30	M-F	Feb09-Mar06
	6:00-9:00	M-F	Feb09-Mar06
	8:00-6:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb28
	8:00-6:00	Sun	Jan18-Feb29
Network	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Jan20-Feb13
Infrastructure	9:00-4:00	Sat	Jan10-Mar08
P9,000/48hrs	6:00-9:00	M-Th	Feb19-Mar07
Linux System	1:30-4:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb06
Administration	6:00-9:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb06
(Linux +)	8:00-6:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
P8,200/45hrs	8:00-6:00	Sun	Jan25-Feb29
Linux Network	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan19-Jan30
Administration	9:00-12:00	M-F	Feb02-Feb13
P5,500/30hrs			
Introduction to	8:00-12:00	M-F	Jan12-Jan30
Oracle 9i SQL	1:00-6:00	MTThF	Jan12-Feb06
P10,000/60hrs	8:00-12:00	M-F	Feb04-Feb24
	1:00-6:00	MTThF	Feb09-Mar4
CISCO 1	1:00-5:00	M&W	Jan05-Mar05
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan10-Mar07
CISCO 2	1:00-5:00	T&Th	Jan06-Mar6
CISCO 3	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jan11-Mar08
	6:00-9:00	T&F	Jan06-Mar28
CISCO4	6:00-9:00	MWTH	Jan06-Feb13
P8,000.00/70hrs			
Active	9:00-4:00	Sun	Jan25-Feb29
Directory	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Feb03-Feb20
Services			
P6,000.00/36hrs			

ELECTRONICS

Basic Electronics	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb14
P3,900/36hrs	8:00-12:00	MTTh	Jan12-Jan29
	8:00-12:00	MTTh	Feb2-Feb19
	1:00-5:00	M-Th	Jan12-Jan26
	1:00-5:00	M-Th	Feb2-Feb16
	5:30-8:30	MTThF	Jan12-Jan22
	5:30-8:30	MTThF	Feb2-Feb16
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb14
Microcomputer	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb14
Hardware	8:00-5:00	Fri	Jan23-Feb20
Fundamentals	8:00-12:00	TWTh	Jan13-Jan29
P4,300/36hrs	1:00-5:00	MWTh	Jan12-Jan29
	1:00-5:00	MTTh	Feb02-Feb19
Microcomputer	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb14
Hardware	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Feb02-Feb17
Servicing	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Feb02-Feb17
P4,500/35hrs	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Jan12-Jan27
	8:30-12:00	M-Th	Jan12-Jan27
Advanced	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Feb2-Feb17
Microcomputer	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb14
Hardware	8:00-5:00	Fri	Jan23-Feb20
Servicing			
P4,500/35hrs			
TV& Monitor	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb14
Servicing	5:30-8:30	M-F	Feb02-Feb17
P3,900/36hrs	5:00-8:30	M-F	Jan12-Jan27
Practical	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan12-Jan22
Cellular Phone			
Servicing P4,800/27hrs			
Home Video	8:00-12:00	Sat	Jan31-Feb21
Editing			
P3,300/16hrs			

AUTOMOTIVE/REF C AIR-CON

Auto Engine	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb06
Electrical	2:00-5:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb05
P3,000/42hrs			
Auto Body	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb09
Electrical	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb09
P3,600/48hrs	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb28
Gas Engine	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
Mechanic	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
P4,200/60hrs	8:00-6:00	Sat	Jan19-Mar12
Diesel Engine	2:00-6:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
Mechanic	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
P4,200/60hrs	8:00-6:00	Sat	Jan19-Mar12
Basic Car	2:00-5:00	M-F	Jan19-Jan30
Maintenance	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan18-Feb14
P2,800/30hrs			
Underchassis	2:00-6:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
Mechanic			
P3,900/60hrs			
Electronic	2:00-6:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb9
Fuel Injection			
Servicing			
P4,200/48hrs			
Refrigeration &	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
Air conditioning	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
Mechanic	8:00-6:00	Sat	Jan24-Mar12
P4,500/60hrs			
Automatic	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jan19-Feb13
Transmission			
Mechanic			
P4,200.00/60hrs			
Basic Car	2:00-5:00	M-F	Jan19-Jan30
Maintenance	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan19-Feb14
P2,800/30hrs			

ELECTRICAL

Industrial	6:30-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb11
Electrician	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb11
P4,500/66hrs	8:30-12:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb11
	8:00-5:30	Sat	Jan17-Mar06
	8:00-5:30	Sun	Jan12-Feb05
Building Wiring	8:30-12:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb10
Installation &	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb10
Maintenance	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Mar06
P4,600/60hrs			
Adv. Industrial	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb10
Motor Controls	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Mar06
P4,500/60hrs	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jan18-Mar07
AutoCAD	8:30-12:00	T-F	Jan13-Feb17
P4,600/72hrs	1:30-5:00	T-F	Jan13-Feb17
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Mar13
	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jan18-Mar14
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb16
Electrical Control	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb05
Wiring Installer	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb21
& Troubleshooter			
P4,600/48hrs			
Motor & Transf.	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jan12-Feb10
Rewinding			
P4,500./60hrs			

INSTRUMENTATION

Pneumatic	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb06
Industrial Controls			
P4,200/42hrs			
Electro-Pneumatics	5:30-8:30	M-F	Feb09-Feb27
P4,200/42hrs	8:00-4:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb21
Basic PLC	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb06
P4,200/42hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	Feb09-Feb27
	8:00-4:00	Sat	Jan17-Feb21
Calibration	5:30-8:30	M-F	Aug18-Sep05
For Process	9:00-4:00	Sat	Aug16-Sep20
Instrumentation			
P4,200/36hrs			
Industrial Process	5:30-8:30	M-F	Feb09-Feb27
Controls	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan12-Jan30
P4,200/36hrs			
Process	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan13-Feb21
Automation Course			
P7,500/72hrs			
Machine	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan13-Mar14
Automation Course			
P10,800/126hrs			

MECHANICAL

Lathe Machine	6:00-9:00	MTThF	Jan19-Feb03
Operation			
P5,000/40hrs			
Milling Machine	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb21
Operation			
P5,000/40hrs			
Basic CAD/CAM	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb21
P3,500/40hrs			
Gas Welding	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jan19-Feb04
P3,600/40hrs	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jan21-Feb21
CNC Milling	8:00-5:00	SAT	Jan24-Feb21
Programming			
P3,500/40hrs			

APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES

Enhancing	9:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb21
Communication Skills			
P3,000/21hrs			
Creating Preventive	9:00-5:00	Sat	Jan24-Feb14
Maintenance Systems			
P3,000/21hrs			
Customer	9:00-5:00	Sat	Jan31-Feb14
Service			
P3,000/21hrs			

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Military to go after killers of soldier, son

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY will launch a manhunt for the New People's Army guerrillas who killed an Army corporal and his son in Eastern Samar on New Year's Eve.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told reporters yesterday the Armed Forces of the Philippines would apply its full might against the NPA once the AFP's suspension of military operations (SOMO) ends on Monday.

"We have been saying all along that the SOMO declared by the NPA was a mere deception. The brutal killing of the soldier in Samar attests to this," Lucero told reporters.

The AFP declared a ceasefire on Dec. 10 in deference to the holiday season. The NPA's own SOMO which it declared on Dec. 20 is due to end today.

Suspected members of the NPA opened fire on Cpl. Alfredo Monutcho, 47, of the 57th Infantry Battalion, in front of his house in Barangay Tominamos, Sta. Rita, Eastern Samar shortly before midnight on Wednesday.

Monutcho's son was initially wounded in the attack but he expired while being treated at the provincial hospital. Also wounded was Monutcho's daughter Rebecca, 23.

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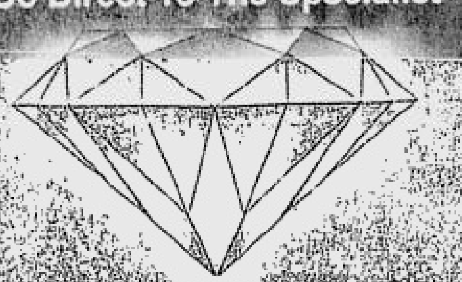

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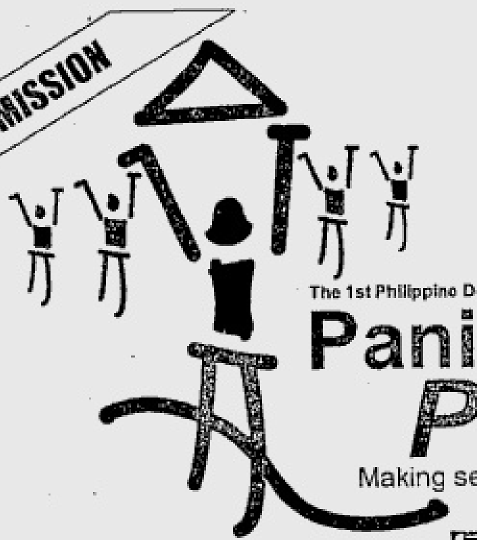

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 9, 2004

10:30 A.M.	OPENING CEREMONIES	Megatrade Hall 3 Stage Area
	Invocation	Professor Grace Odal
	Philippine National Anthem	VSE Bulacan Theater Group
	Opening Number	Los Ruiseñores
	Welcome Remarks	Mr. Robert Vance Pulley Country Director World Bank Philippines
	Keynote Address	The Hon. Corazon C. Aquino Former President Republic of the Philippines Streamline
	Closing Number	
	Symbolic Opening Rites	
	Tour of Exhibits	
	PERFORMANCES	
	Sustaining Performances	Megatrade Hall 2 Stage Area
1:00 P.M.	Los Ruiseñores	
1:30 P.M.	Himig Muntinlupa	
2:00 P.M.	Kaibigan Vocal Ensembles	
2:30 P.M.	Muntinlupa Dance Company	
7:00 P.M.	The Bayanihan, the National Folk Dance Co. of the Phils	
	ARTS & CRAFTS DEMONSTRATIONS	
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN	NVRC Cotton Weaving	Luzon Vignette
	Cebu Guitar Making	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Cloth Weaving	Mindanao Vignette
1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.	Bicol Clay Pot Making	Luzon Vignette
	Leyte Bang Weaving	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Beads and Accessory-making	Mindanao Vignette
4:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	NVRC Cotton Weaving	Luzon Vignette
	Cebu Guitar Making	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Cloth Weaving	Mindanao Vignette
7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.	Bicol Clay Pot Making	Luzon Vignette
	Leyte Bang Weaving	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Beads and Accessory-making	Mindanao Vignette
	KNOWLEDGE FORUM	
2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.	Roundtable Discussions on Making Services Work for the Poor	Megatrade Function Rm. B
4:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.	Funders Forum. A Guide to Resources for NGOs & CSOs	Megatrade Function Rm. B & Megatrade Hall 2 Stage Area (Parallel Sessions)

JANUARY 10, 2004

5:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.	CLOSING CEREMONIES AND AWARDS NIGHT (BY INVITATION ONLY)	Megatrade Hall 3 Stage Area
	Invocation	Hangad Music Ministry
	Philippine National Anthem	VSE Bulacan Theater Group
		Welcome Remarks Mr. Robert Vance Pulley Country Director World Bank Philippines
	Keynote Address	Secretary Camilo Sabio Lead Convenor National Anti-Poverty Commission
	Cocktails	
	Announcement of the 1st Batch of Winners	
	Intermission Number	
	Announcement of the 2nd Batch of Winners	
	Intermission Number	
	Announcement of the 3rd Batch of Winners	
	Closing Number	
	PERFORMANCES	
	Sustaining Performances	Megatrade Hall 2 Stage Area
11:00 A.M.	Hangad Music Ministry	
1:00 P.M.	Pahmis Dance Troupe	
	Amanahis	
2:00 P.M.	Halili Cruz School of Ballet	
	ARTS & CRAFTS DEMONSTRATIONS	
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN	NVRC Cotton Weaving	Luzon Vignette
	Leyte Bang Weaving	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Cloth Weaving	Mindanao Vignette
1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.	Bicol Clay Pot Making	Luzon Vignette
	Cebu Guitar Making	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Beads and Accessory-making	Mindanao Vignette
4:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	NVRC Cotton Weaving	Luzon Vignette
	Leyte Bang Weaving	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Cloth Weaving	Mindanao Vignette
7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.	Bicol Clay Pot Making	Luzon Vignette
	Cebu Guitar Making	Visayas Vignette
	Davao del Sur Beads and Accessory-making	Mindanao Vignette
	KNOWLEDGE FORUM	
3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.	Showcasing Success in Development Innovation & Lessons Learned in Implementation: Past DM Winners Panel Discussion	Megatrade Hall 2 Exhibit Stage

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

A US ARMY soldier of the 82nd Airborne Division secure an area where a Kiowa reconnaissance helicopter was shot down in the restive central Iraqi town of Falluja Jan. 2. REUTERS

US chopper shot down in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Insurgents shot down a US military helicopter in the western powderkeg Iraqi town of Fallujah, killing a soldier, as US commanders dismissed protests against a raid on a Baghdad mosque, saying a major weapons cache had been uncovered there.

Insurgents also derailed a train in western Iraq, hitting it with a rocket-propelled grenade, a US military statement said Saturday.

"An Iraqi train en route to Habbaniyah was attacked with a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG)," on Friday, the 82nd Airborne Division said.

"The round impacted the train and disabled the vehicle," it added.

The 82nd Airborne Division described the attackers as "looters" and said they only stripped the train of its engine batteries.

Around the capital, heavy artillery fire reverberated late Friday as the US military pressed its 10-day-old Operation Iron Grip, hammering rebel positions suspected of firing mortars.

The coalition's deputy director of operations, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, confirmed the OH-58 Delta Kiowa reconnaissance helicopter was downed on the western outskirts of Fallujah on Friday by assailants apparently posing as journalists.

A US military spokesperson said one soldier was killed and another wounded when the Kiowa went down.

Witnesses in Fallujah said they saw a helicopter come under guerrilla fire before crashing near the Euphrates River, shortly after weekly Muslim prayers.

"US forces began search operations this morning in Fallujah. They visited grain dealers searching for weapons. They were supported by two helicopters," said Waad Ibrahim.

"I watched the two helicopters and suddenly I heard an explosion and one of the two planes caught fire before crashing."

A local farmer, Ismael Jassem, said he "saw one of the helicopters taking fire and it crashed behind the bridge on the Euphrates River west of Fallujah." Another witness, Thaeer Hadi, said he was riding a bicycle with friends when he heard the explosion.

"We saw the helicopter split into two halves through the tail, flip upside down and crash," he said.

Machine-gun fire was heard as soldiers sealed off the smoldering wreckage just off a main highway in a semi-rural area dotted with palm groves.

Kimmitt said that five people wearing black vests marked "press" pulled up at the scene of the crash in two Mercedes sedans and began firing rocket-propelled grenades, adding that they were chased by US troops, who captured four of them. *AFP*

US explorer spacecraft hurtles toward Mars landing

PASADENA, Calif.—A rock-inspecting rover hurtled toward Mars for a perilous landing on Saturday on what Nasa hopes will become a historic mission to answer the age-old question of whether life existed on the red planet.

The robotic explorer's arrival on Mars would be the climax of a weekend of interplanetary discovery after a US spacecraft on Friday gathered particles from a comet in a first that could give scientists clues about how Earth began.

Scientists from the US space agency anxiously monitored the Spirit rover's approach to the rugged Martian landscape for a bouncing landing scheduled for 8:35 p.m. PST (12:35 p.m. Sunday in Manila).

A second rover, nicknamed Opportunity, is expected to land on the other side of the Red Planet in three weeks.

The rovers, which were launched in June and July, have been traveling through space tucked inside a folded-up lander, which is wrapped in deflated air bags inside a protective shell.

As each lander heads toward the planet's surface by parachute, it should jettison the shell and inflate the air bags, allowing the craft to bounce safely for up to one kilometer before coming to a stop. But the landing is not without risk.

"One gust of wind, one sharp pointy rock and we could have a really bad night," Steve Squyres, principal scientist for the rover at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, said.

The laboratory is fresh from one success. On Friday it celebrated a milestone when another spacecraft, Stardust, survived a wild ride inside a gas and debris field surrounding the comet and returned vivid images of its pitted nucleus to scientists.

The cometary particles, believed to be among the oldest and most primitive material in the solar system, will be returned to Earth in 2006 for study.

The Spirit rover is expected to touch down inside the Gusev crater, an impact crater bigger than the US state of Connecticut that may have once held a lake.

The landing sequence takes the spacecraft from 19,000 kph to a full stop in six minutes, and must be executed flawlessly, Ed Weiler, Nasa's associate administrator for space science, said, "It's going to be six minutes from hell... it's going to be high anxiety."

"Mars is an incredibly difficult place to land... some call it the death planet," Weiler added, noting outside auditors had screened the $820 million mission's systems for flaws. "I don't know what else we can do to ensure success. It's up to Mars now."

Nasa says more than half of all missions to Mars have met with disaster.

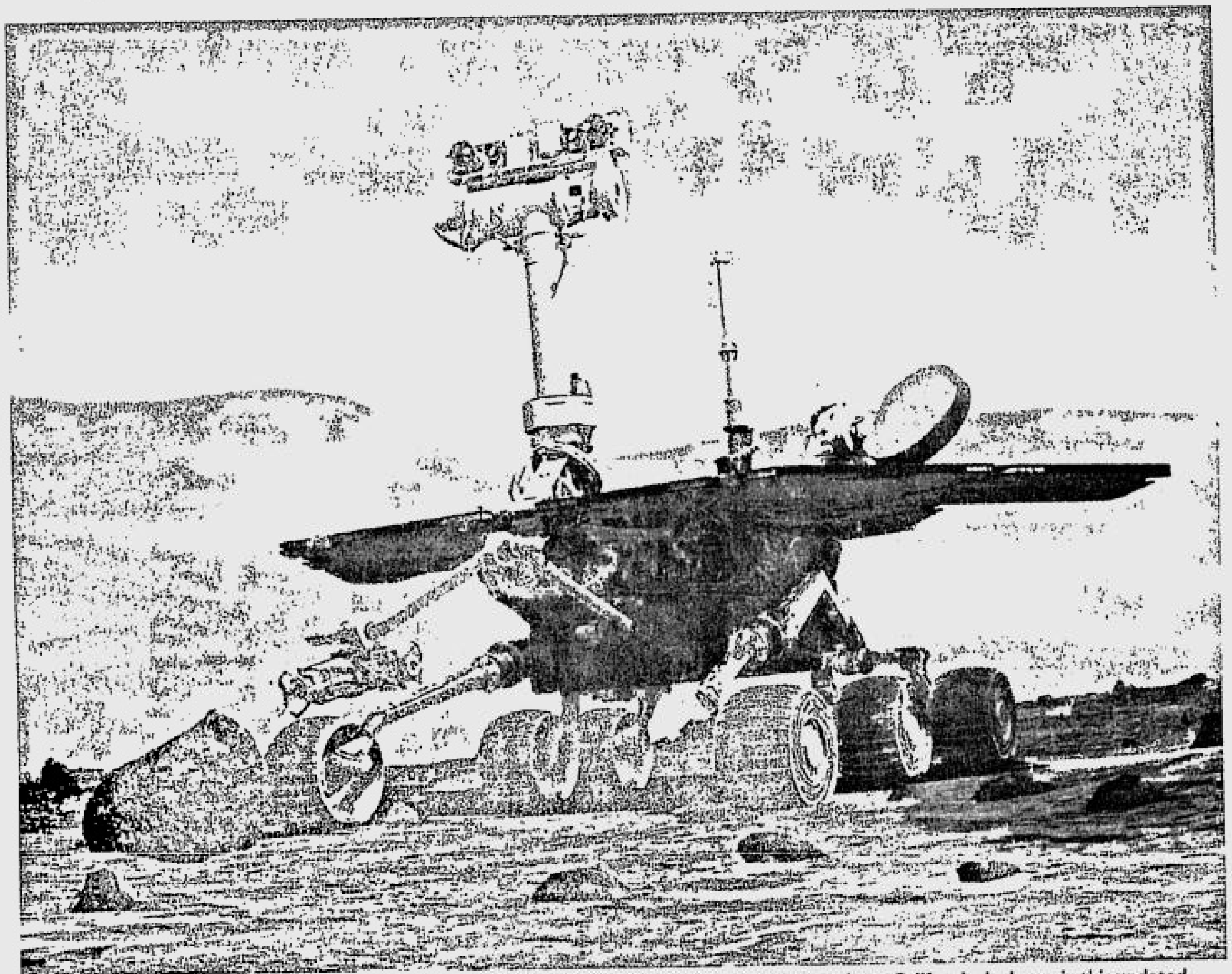
The European Space Agency is still searching for a probe that was supposed to parachute onto Mars on Christmas Day but never sent a signal to confirm the landing.

The Spirit lander was programmed to send a sequence of tones during and after landing to let the Nasa team know that it has completed certain tasks. If that signal fails, two observation satellites also can carry signals from the lander to Earth.

After coming to rest on the planet's surface, the lander will spring open and the rover will spend about a week unfolding itself and scanning its surroundings for a safe direction of travel.

If all goes as planned, the golf cart-sized robots aboard Spirit and Opportunity, which are crammed with cameras and scientific instruments designed to study the geologic record of Mars, may bring mankind one step closer to learning whether life existed—or still exists, in some form—on the planet.

"We can't even forecast what we might learn," James Garvin, Nasa's lead scientist for Mars exploration, said. *Reuters*



THE MARS Exploration Rover, Spirit, developed by the Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, is shown in this undated artist's drawing released by the Nasa. The rover is shown as it would be taking a geology sample on Mars. REUTERS

Terror alerts sow air travel turmoil

WASHINGTON—Attack alerts caused the cancelation of more international flights from Britain to the United States and Saudi Arabia on Friday, and US fighter jets were ready to intercept any hijacked airliner.

British Airways canceled flights to Washington and Riyadh while an Air France jet going from New York to Paris had to land in Canada because of heightened security.

Amid international complaints about tougher precautions on planes, the US administration defended its role in the flight disruption.

Seven international flights into the United States—three from France, two from Britain and two from Mexico—have now been canceled since Dec. 24. The US government raised its nationwide terrorist attack alert three days earlier.

British Airways called off Flight 217 from London to Washington, and its return flight, for the second day running. Saturday afternoon's London-Riyadh flight BA 263 was also scrapped, along with the return flight on Sunday.

The company said it would decide at the weekend whether to operate a flight Monday to Saudi Arabia. It is the second time the airline has canceled a flight to Riyadh.

The airline said the cancelations of the US and Saudi flights followed "security advice" from the British government.

Some 300 passengers had already checked in at London-Heathrow airport for Flight 223 when the airline scrapped the flight about two hours before its scheduled departure.

William Mallett, a 38-year-old Briton, should have been on the jet with his wife Cathy Lewis and their 1-year-old son. He said: "I have been telling myself that if they are paying attention to this flight in particular, that is a good thing." *AFP*

Blizzards hit US west

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah—Blizzards that began Christmas Eve have crippled parts of the mountainous western United States, piling more than two meters of snow on Salt Lake City, Utah, and killing a couple whose mountain cabin in neighboring Idaho was buried by an avalanche as they slept.

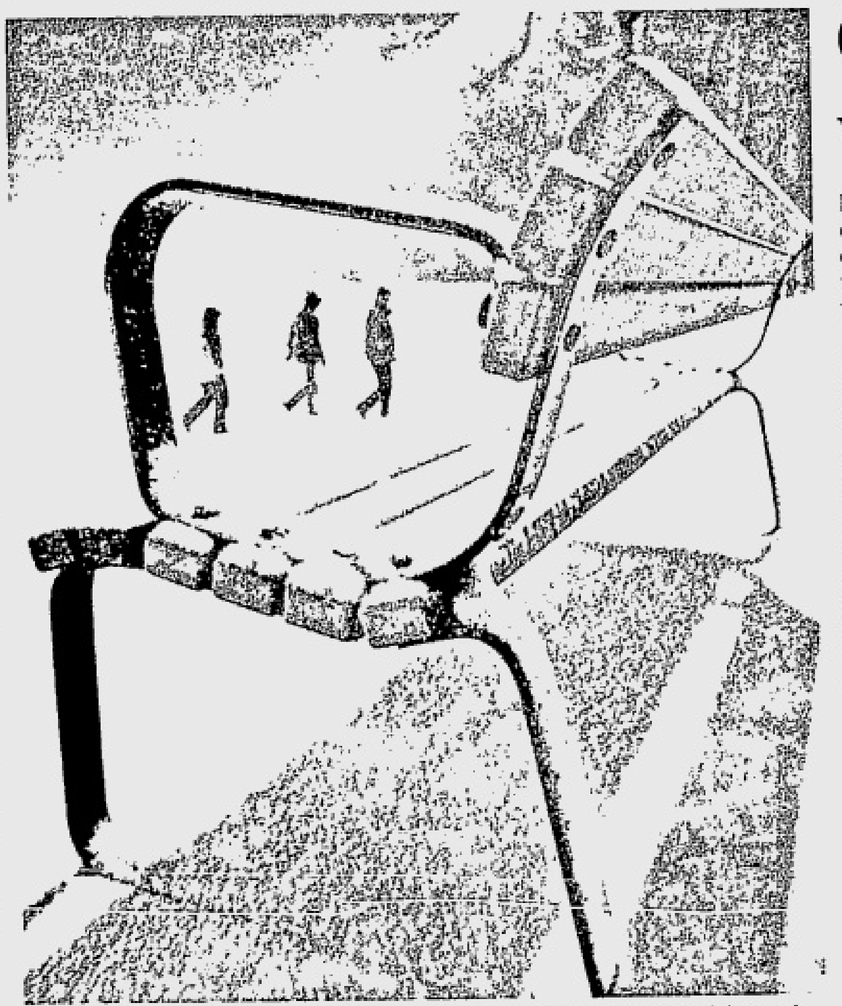
Marsha Landolt, 55, the dean of the University of Washington Graduate School, and her husband, Robert Busch, 58, died early Friday when their cabin was engulfed by the snowslide, Camas County, Idaho, Sheriff Dave Sanders said.

Five other family members staying at the cabin somehow survived, he said.

More than 25 major roads in Idaho were made impassable by snow.

In Utah, more that 10,000 homes were without power as utility crews have struggled to restore power lines downed by the snow accumulations.

Utah Power and Light was also the victim of a bomb scare. A caller believed to be an irate customer phoned the company saying there was a bomb at a Salt Lake City power plant, but authorities found nothing at the site. *AFP*



PEOPLE out for a late evening walk pass by a snow-covered park bench in north Vancouver, during a winter storm on Dec. 30. REUTERS

Chinese may be infected with new strain of SARS

BEIJING—Confusion over whether a suspected SARS patient in China has the disease deepened Saturday when tests suggested he may have been infected by a new strain of the virus, media reported.

The report Saturday from south China's Guangdong province, where the patient is being treated in hospital, echoed previous announcements that the 32-year-old may have SARS.

"It is possible that the man with the suspected case of SARS in the province has contracted SARS," the official Xinhua news agency said, citing the Center for Disease Prevention and Control in Guangdong.

This comes after a week of is-he isn't-he debate on the status of the patient as a torrent of conflicting test results left experts unable to say definitively if he is suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The statement followed investigations of the genetic make-up of the virus found in the man, showing he may have contracted a variation of the SARS-related coronavirus that had previously gone undetected, Xinhua said.

Late Friday, the World Health Organization was equally non committal, saying initial tests showed the man might indeed have been exposed to the coronavirus that causes SARS, although it would take days to tell for sure.

This was the preliminary conclusion from a test—conducted only once so far, and early on in the case—that measured the level of SARS-neutralizing antibodies in the patient's blood, the WHO said in a statement.

"The results from that neutralization test indicated that the patient may have been slightly exposed to the SARS coronavirus at some point, but it was impossible to determine exactly when," the statement said.

The suspected case emerged a week ago when the TV-station worker was admitted to hospital with a fever, the first indication of SARS.

While Chinese authorities soon after said tests showed he was suffering from the potentially lethal disease, the WHO and other Chinese experts said more research was needed for a diagnosis to be made.

The news struck fear into a region still recovering from the spring 2003 outbreak of the mysterious disease, which went on to kill almost 800 people worldwide and wrecked Asian economies in its wake.

WHO experts discussing the findings in a late-night teleconference Friday agreed that new neutralization tests would have to be made to get a clearer picture.

The additional virus neutralization tests will compare the level of SARS-neutralizing antibodies in the patients blood over recent days with levels found early in the course of his disease.

"Some of the most useful antibody tests are when samples collected during the early phase of infection are compared with samples taken during the recovery phase," Julie Hall, SARS team leader of the WHO China office, said in the statement. *AFP*

Egyptian plane crashes into Red Sea; all 148 passengers, crew dead

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—An Egyptian Boeing 737 airliner carrying 135 mostly French tourists crashed into the Red Sea off the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on Saturday and eyewitnesses said they saw no sign of survivors.

The plane, operated by the Egyptian company Flash Airlines, disappeared from radar screens minutes after take-off from Sharm el-Sheikh airport at 0244 GMT and crashed in deep water to the southeast, official sources said.

There was no immediate word on the cause of the crash but Civil Aviation Ministry Secretary General Abo Ghanima said the plane appeared to have had an accident. "Until now there is no sign of terrorism," he said.

A French diplomat based in Egypt said there were 135 passengers aboard, all but one French, and 13 Egyptian and Moroccan crew members. "We are still waiting for more details," the diplomat added.

Egyptian military planes, helped by many small boats from nearby diving centers, launched a rescue operation at dawn but the eyewitnesses said all they were finding were small pieces of wreckage and that no survivors appeared to have come ashore.

The plane crashed in the Strait of Tiran, between the Sinai peninsula and Saudi Arabia, where the water is about 1,000 meters deep.

"You can see very small pieces of wreckage. No big pieces of the plane are to be found. We have not seen any survivors brought ashore yet," said a witness who asked not to be named.

"They (the rescue teams) are saying they cannot find bodies, just parts of the planes," said Federico Valle, the manager of the diving center at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Sharm el-Sheikh.

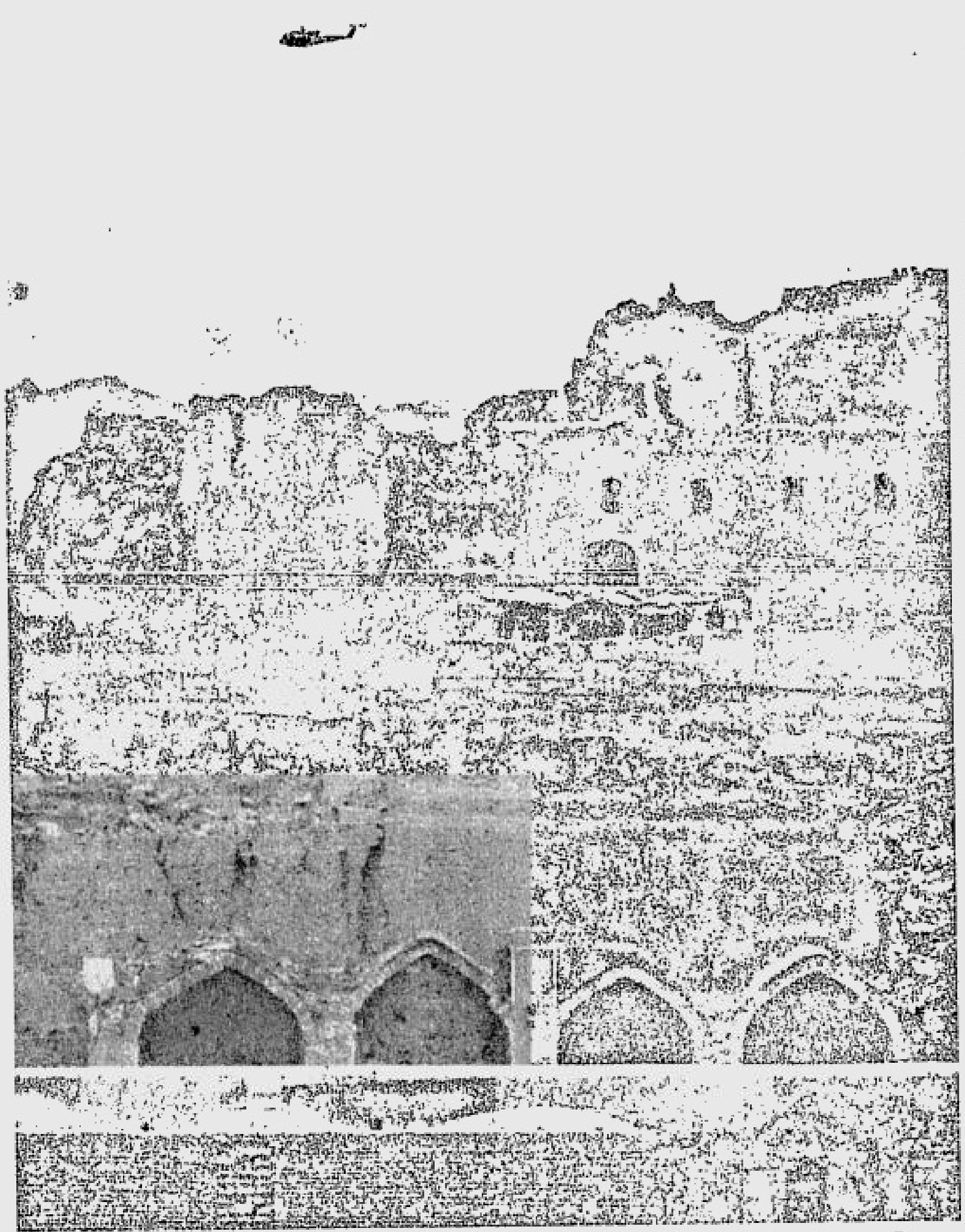
A Flash Airlines official said: "All we know right now is that a plane disappeared two minutes after taking off from Sharm el-Sheikh on its way to Cairo. The flight number was 8604."

Eyewitnesses in Sharm el-Sheikh said the rescue operation was concentrating on an area about one km off Naama Bay, the site of many large hotels.

An Egyptian armed forces C-130 transport plane and two helicopters were taking part in the search, witnesses said.

Egyptian officials said the plane had been heading for Cairo, about 400 km northwest of Sharm el-Sheikh. A French official said the plane was then to fly from Cairo to Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

Flash Airlines is an Egyptian charter airline company based in Cairo and flying to European cities. It flies two Boeing 737-300 planes manufactured in 1993, according to its Web site. *Reuters*



A HELICOPTER flies over the destroyed ancient citadel in the southeastern Iranian city of Bam on Dec. 28. The historic 2,000-year-old citadel, one of the wonders of Iran's heritage, was almost completely destroyed in the earthquake which hit the city on Dec. 26. AFP

Iran plans to rebuild ancient citadel razed by deadly quake

BAM, Iran—Most of the 30 circular guard towers have crumbled into avalanches of dirt, along with parts of the thick, mud-brick walls. The bathhouses, gymnasiums and a Zoroastrian temple that survived for centuries now resemble a moonscape.

The earthquake that killed nearly a third of this Iranian city's people last week also devastated its archaeological jewel—the Arg-e-Bam, or Citadel of Bam, the world's largest mud-brick fortress, parts of which date back 2,200 years.

But even as aftershocks sent more of its walls crashing down, Iran's government is vowing to rebuild it.

"The citadel was almost as precious as the lives lost in the earthquake," Fakoor Pass, director of cultural heritage for Kerman province where Bam is located, said on Friday. Officials are "100 percent sure we will" rebuild it.

More than 30,000 people are believed to have died in the 6.6-magnitude temblor that struck before dawn Dec. 26, burying thousands alive as they slept.

Much of the historic citadel on the outskirts of the modern city collapsed like a sand castle.

The citadel, which covered about 2½ square miles, was made up of a looming fortress on a rocky hill top and the ancient town, encircled by walls standing some 24 meters tall in some spots. Along the walls were the circular watchtowers, with slits for archers, and gates with peaked archways.

The structures were all built of sun-baked bricks and straw—which under the quake's punishment was reduced to dirt that avalanched down the hill's slopes.

Now the distinctive square tower that stood as the highest part of the fortress has disappeared. Many of the watchtowers are circular stumps with dirt cascaded down the sides. Upper parts of the walls have toppled as if hit by a barrage of cannon fire. Most of the ancient town's buildings lie flattened.

The interior of the fortress once housed bathhouses, schools, two mosques and a temple of the Zoroastrians, the religion that dominated Iran before the coming of Islam.

The site is said to have had a citadel city since 250 B.C. but it was rebuilt continually through the centuries. Most of the structures seen by modern-day tourists were thought to range in age from a few hundreds years to perhaps 1,000 years. Much of the fortress was built under the Safavids, the dynasty that ruled Iran from the late 1400s to the 1720s.

Three people were in the fortress when the quake struck: Two guards were crushed at their watchposts at the main entrance, and Pass helped rescue the citadel's custodian, who survived seven hours under the ruins before being dug out.

With most of Bam's surviving population sheltering through freezing nights in tents next to the ruins of their homes—and hundreds, perhaps thousands more corpses still buried in the rubble of modern-day Bam—rebuilding antiquity might seem the least of the town's worries.

But Iranian President Mohammad Khatami vowed to restore the citadel to its former glory, saying last week that a committee of foreign experts would determine how best to rebuild it.

The UN cultural agency, Unesco—which had considered declaring the citadel a protected World Heritage Site—has offered to help reconstruct the fortress, and its officials will visit it Saturday, Pass said. Several countries have also voiced interest in supporting the rebuilding, he said. *AP*

Margaret could have kept title if she had wed lover, say papers

PRINCESS Margaret, in a November 1995 file photo

LONDON—Princess Margaret was promised she could keep her royal title and allowances if she defied official advice and married her divorced lover in the 1950s, according to government papers published Friday.

But Margaret, the younger sister of Queen Elizabeth II, would have had to give up her place in succession to the throne, and with it any entitlement of her heirs, according to papers released to the National Archives.

The disclosure of Margaret's affair with Townsend—a dashing former equerry to her father King George VI and 18 years her senior—caused a public sensation.

But it was not the age difference or the fact that Townsend was a commoner, rather the fact that he was divorced that riled Britons and the Church of England, which opposes the remarriage of divorcees. The monarch is temporal head of the church.

When, after weeks of prevarication, Margaret announced on Oct. 31, 1955 that she had given up any idea of marrying Townsend, it was reported that she had been threatened with the loss of most of her royal privileges.

But the newly released documents show she would have kept her royal allowances, then up to £9,000 ($15,300) a year for a married person.

She would have remained Her Royal Highness and may have continued to carry out public duties, depending on the public reaction to her marriage.

The papers even suggest that in time Townsend also could have received a title and an official allowance.

But the level of concern—and the extent of the pressure on the princess—is underlined in an unsigned handwritten memorandum in the files.

"If she is uncertain in her mind, she will doubtless weigh carefully all the adverse considerations, which should then assume greater force. It is clearly not a marriage which all sections of the country would welcome wholeheartedly," it warned.

While Margaret made up her mind, Anthony Eden, who was prime minister at the time, noted that it "could do the monarchy no good if the decision were held up much longer."

The files also make clear that the prime minister's office had made extensive arrangements should she decide to marry Townsend.

A series of draft statements to Parliament was drawn up announcing "legislation designed to relieve Her Royal Highness and her descendants of their rights to the succession to the throne."

The notes show Eden was also prepared to abolish the Royal Marriages Act 1772, passed during the reign of King George III, that required members of the Royal Family to seek the consent of the monarch to marry, although once they reached the age of 25 they could wed anyway, provided Parliament did not object.

In 1978, Margaret's marriage to the photographer Anthony Armstrong-Jones ended in divorce. The couple had two children, David and Sarah. Margaret died in 2002. *AP*

Late pardon for Swiss who helped Jews

GENEVA—Switzerland has pardoned citizens convicted of helping Jews fleeing the Nazis to enter the country in violation of wartime neutrality rules under a law passed after years of national soul searching.

The law, which came into effect on Thursday, pardons people who broke the strict wartime immigration code, which underpinned Switzerland's status as a neutral country in World War Two.

The pardon comes too late for most people who helped Jewish and other refugees escape persecution in Nazi Germany. Only a handful of those pardoned are thought to be alive and the law provides no compensation.

Proponents of the law say it will help repair Switzerland's reputation by showing that many Swiss came to the aid of Holocaust victims.

Parliament passed the law in June after the Swiss spent years examining their neutral wartime role and an admittedly anti-Jewish refugee policy that turned back thousands to face near-certain death at the hands of the Nazis. *Reuters*

Israeli army lifts blockade of flashpoint West Bank city

JENIN, West Bank—Palestinians in a flashpoint West Bank city now separated from Israel by a controversial barrier awoke on Friday to a rare sight—streets empty of Israeli forces who had lifted a long encirclement.

The army said removal of the "closure" it imposed on Jenin in August after a truce declared by Palestinian factions collapsed amid violence was "in keeping with assessments of the security situation."

Jenin, a hotbed of militants and the scene of heavy fighting in April 2002, has been surrounded by Israeli forces for the better part of three years of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Residents said routes were opened between the city's eight entrances and surrounding villages after Israeli troops dismantled roadblocks and tanks pulled back.

"Jenin has served as a nest of terror in the past, and has been a springboard for many attacks against Israel," David Baker, an official in the Prime Minister's office, said.

"But in line with our policy, we are willing to make adjustments... without harming Israel's security interest," he said. "Israel has no intention to impede on the lives of Palestinians."

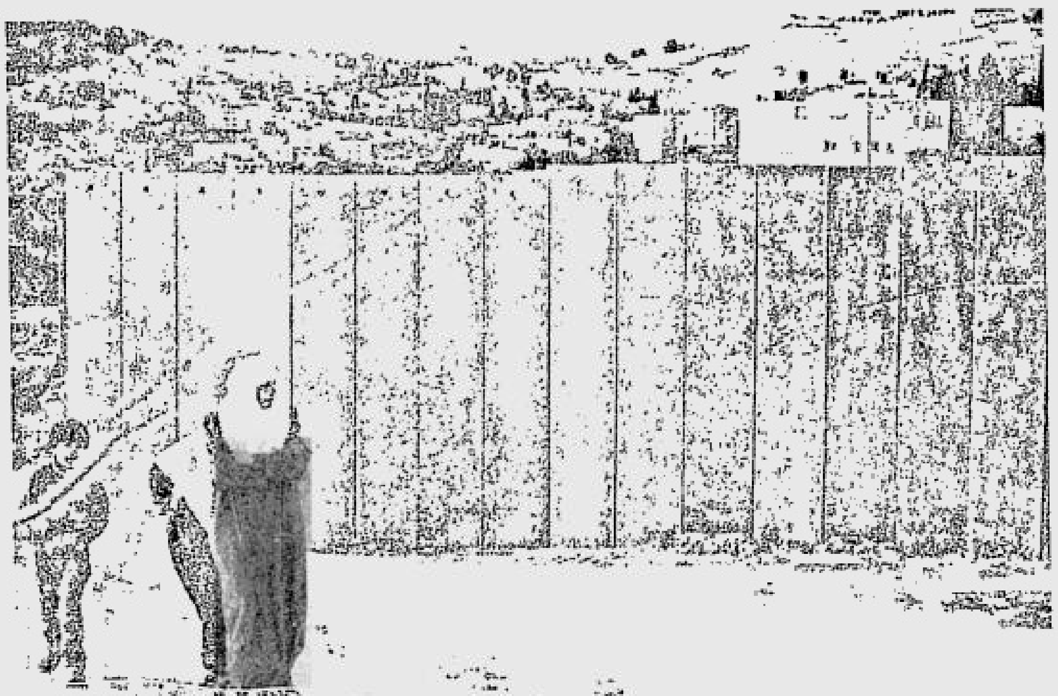
The West Bank barrier, which Israel says stops suicide bombers from reaching its cities, looms several kilometers to the north and northwest.

Palestinians call the project, which has drawn international condemnation, a land grab aimed at denying them the contiguous state they hope to establish in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel is meant to ease restrictions on Palestinians under a US-backed peace "road map" bogged down by persistent violence and the failure of either side to take promised steps.

Palestinians are supposed to crack down on militant factions while Israel freezes settlement growth on territory captured in the 1967 war and dismantles unauthorized outposts.

Jenin's Palestinian governor, Ramadan al-Batta, said the army's decision was made without any security coordination with his side and he feared this reflected a new Israeli unilateralism that would marginalize Palestinians. *Reuters*



PALESTINIANS walk past Israel's controversial "security" wall in Abu Dis, separating it from Jerusalem on Jan. 2. The wall is part of the controversial security barrier Israel is building made up of concrete walls, razor wire, fences and trenches and is meant, according to Israel, to keep suicide bombers out. Palestinians condemn the barrier, which dips deep into the West Bank in some areas, as a land grab. AFP

More Thais entering sex trade

BANGKOK—The number of people entering Thailand's booming sex trade rose by 50,000 in 2003 despite an improving economy and the government's war on poverty, a report said Saturday citing a survey.

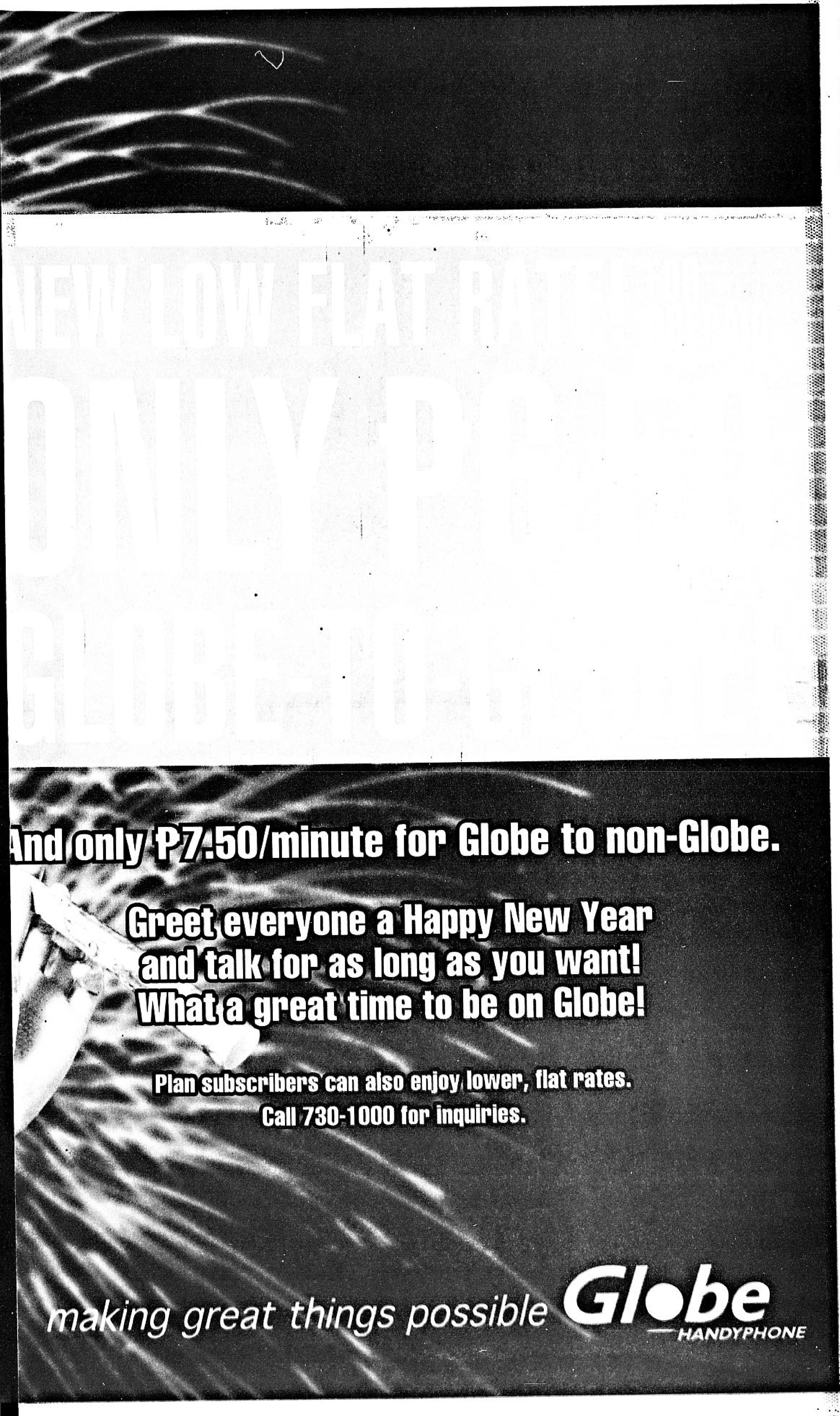
Chulalongkorn University political science professor Nitet Tinnakul said some 2.8 million Thais, including women, men and children, served as sex workers throughout the country from 1999 to 2002, the Nation newspaper said.

About 800,000 of them were under 18 years of age, it said, though the report did not provide comparative annual figures for the industry.

Nitet reportedly listed the number of sex service outlets at 60,000.

"If we judge by the rising number of sex service venues, I believe the number of prostitutes is much higher," Nitet was quoted as saying. *AFP*

talk of the town
*rate per minute



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Contradictions

EDITORIAL

THE OTHER day, the behind-the-scenes leader of the opposition described the Senate slate of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino as a triumph of diversity.

"It's a fairly diversified group representing varied talents and geography, as well as a mix of experience and raw talent, and a mix of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds," Sen. Edgardo Angara told reporters after movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. and running mate Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda filed their certificates of candidacy.

On one level, Angara called it right: the senatorial candidates of the so-called united opposition are a diverse lot. Six senators or ex-senators, three incumbent congressmen, one ex-Cabinet secretary, one ex-youth commissioner, one political neophyte. Six are from Luzon, three from the Visayas, and three from Mindanao. And four of the 12 candidates (a fairly high proportion) are women.

But on a deeper level, the slate is not so much diverse as contradictory.

Of the six who have served or are serving in the Senate, four are closely identified with deposed President Joseph Estrada. Juan Ponce Enrile, Francisco Tatad, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, and John Osmeña all voted to stop the unsealing of the second Jose Velarde envelope during Estrada's impeachment trial in January 2001. Their action—mapped out by Enrile, and then executed on the floor by Tatad, who was the majority leader at that time—was a monumental mistake; it led, in four days, to Estrada's ouster.

Of the three congressmen in the list, one was Estrada's most vocal defender in the House: Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen.

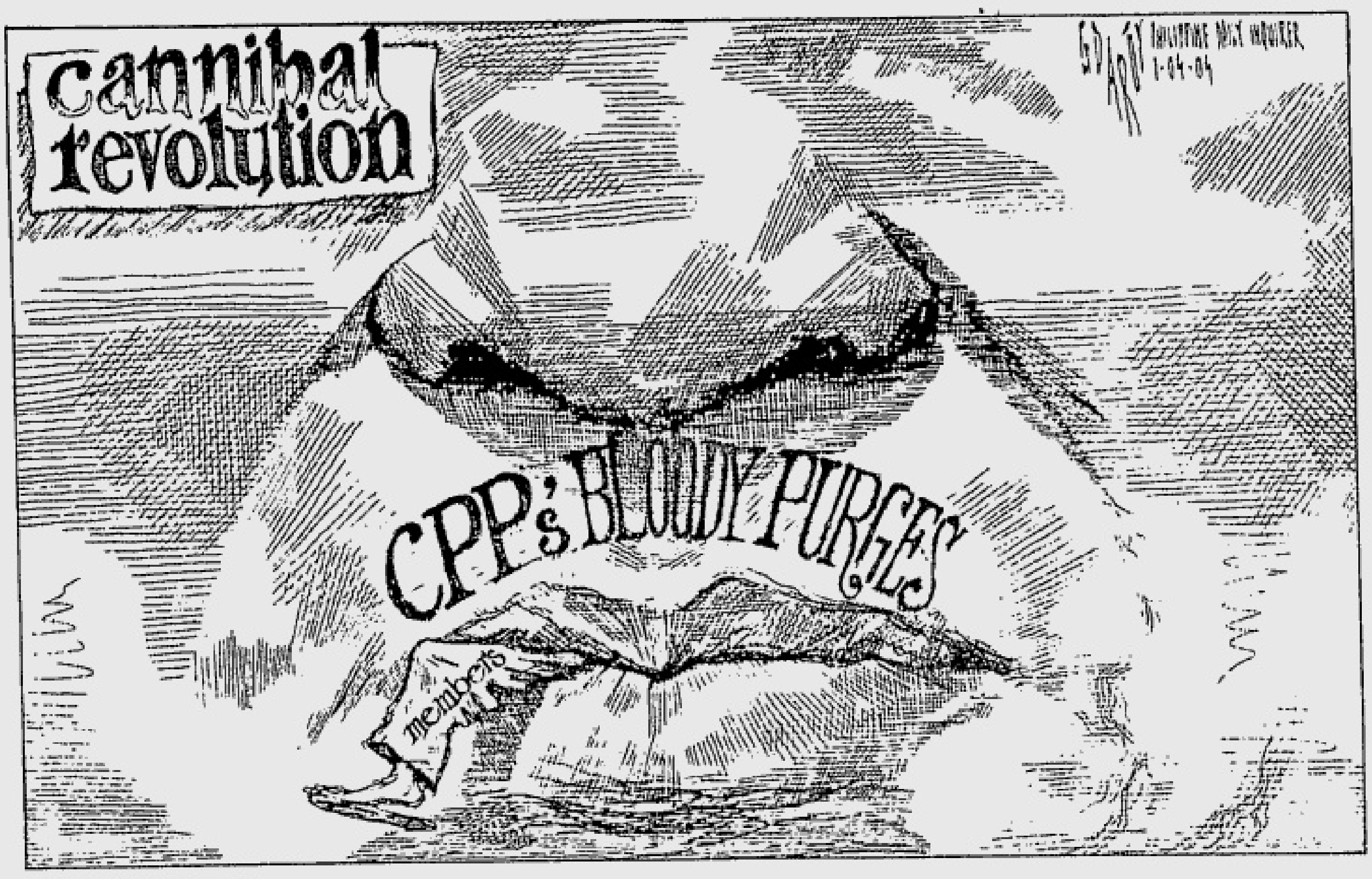
But now these five candidates will share the same campaign stage with ex-congressman Ernesto Herrera, who co-authored the impeachment complaint against Estrada, and Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who as Senate president voted dramatically to open the second Velarde envelope. In fact, it was in the aftermath of the controversial vote, when Pimentel resigned his post, that the tableau that rankles Estrada loyalists to this day was frozen in time: Sen. Franklin Drilon embracing Pimentel on the dais, and Legarda beside them, weeping.

How can those who helped drive Estrada out of the Palace—thereby putting a stop to the plunder that had been centralized right in Malacañang—now campaign for the same office with those who supported him? We are not talking about mere policy differences, but choices that define one's place in history itself. Herrera and Pimentel—and Legarda too—may think the pro-Estrada forces have forgiven them for the role they played three years ago. But the contradictions that define their inclusion in the opposition slate may well lead to a rude awakening.

Pimentel also finds himself on the same side of the political fence as Enrile, the main suspect in the *dagdag-bawas* (add-subtract) cases he filed after he (and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon) became a victim of large-scale electoral fraud in the 1995 elections. That year, he and Enrile ran on the same ticket, a coalition that President Fidel Ramos described at that time as "a marriage of political non-virgins." How can he run for office again with the colleague who was the main beneficiary of his miscounted votes? The contradictions that define his relationship with Enrile, Tatad and Defensor make him, once again, a candidate for junking.

Poe's decision to include House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla Jr. in the slate has been seen by some as a political masterstroke. It undermines Sen. Panfilo Lacson's bid for the presidency, of which Padilla is a staunch supporter. At the same time, it is an attempt to reconcile with Lacson's faction in the opposition LDP party.

But Padilla, who did not seek the slot, is too well-identified with the anti-Angara faction to settle easily into the slate. In fact, Angara's reaction to Padilla's inclusion, which he called tentative, was chilly at best. "He has to make up his mind because he can't have divided loyalties," Angara told reporters. The contradictions that define the current opposition arrangement—Poe is publicly identified as finally responsible for policy and political choices, but Angara is seen as calling the shots from behind the scenes—show a Senate slate that may be too diverse to be effective.



Winnability without ability

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

NOW that the Yuletide is over, it's back to the salt mines for many of us. We tended to be charitable during the festive season, but it's time now to remove the velvet gloves and be bare-fisted again. I do not mean by this that we should eliminate the spirit of goodwill that warmed us last December and be our usual hostile and fault-finding selves again. I simply mean that we should be realistic again and face our problems as before without dissimulation or evasion or baseless optimism.

Those problems have not vanished; we simply did not allow them to bother us while we were celebrating the birth of the Infant Lord. But now they are again claiming our serious concern, perhaps more urgently than before. The ceasefire with the NPA will end two days from now and the armed conflict will begin anew. The hunt for the other criminals—the kidnappers, rapists, murderers, bank robbers, and other miscreants—should be resumed with greater spunk and determination. And there is the national economy, of course, ailing and moribund during these many years, that needs that elusive shot in the arm that can place us on a respectable level with our Asian neighbors.

The most serious issue we will be facing this year is the elections scheduled this coming May for the presidency of the Philippines, the members of Congress and the local officials. It is the single subject that has captivated the attention of the entire citizenry more than at any time in the political history of our country. The reason is the entry in the presidential race of Fernando Poe Jr., Da King of Philippine Movies, an intellectual lightweight and a babe in the woods of public office. He is even at this early hour already being acclaimed and proclaimed by his idolaters as the next President of the Philippines.

The year just ended was full of vagaries, and so, we may expect, will the year just beginning. The idiosyncrasies of the Filipino people are mostly amusing but can sometime be tragically pernicious. In 1998, they elected Joseph Estrada president and in 2001 he was forced to resign as a result of startling revelations of his gross misconduct as the highest official in the land. Erap at least reached college although he did not graduate, besides having held several public offices before. By contrast, FPJ, who was a high school drop-out and has not been even a barangay councilman, is now training his sights on Malacañang.

Actors are not per se disqualified from public office, but they must also be competent besides being handsome and macho and romantic. Where FPJ does not participate in public discussions and excuses himself by simply saying that everything is being prepared, the obvious question is. By whom? *Ang Panday* must prove he is his own man. Where he is just waiting to mouth the script prepared by his handlers, as in the movies, there is reason to doubt his capacity to lead. Competence is not FPJ's strongest suit but in fact his weakest recommendation.

In several political functions where his presence was expected and indeed awaited, Poe was an inexplicable "no show." At a meeting with businessman who wanted to know his plans to improve the weak economy, he made the usual preliminary courtesies and then excused himself before the questioning began, pleading a previous appointment. On another occasion, he disappointed the audience with his absence and bored it with a tape recording and a letter supposedly written by him and read by his unofficial barker, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, a fellow actor and an undistinguished public servant.

A public office cannot be discharged privately or by proxy, and that is what a Poe presidency is offering the electorate. It will be a surrogate presidency with the likes of Edgardo Angara, Juan Ponce Enrile, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, and Francisco Tatad calling the shots in the name of the absentee president. Shyness cannot go that far for the man who would make the palace of the people his private hiding place. Marcos made Malacañang a refuge of scoundrels, and a President Poe would make it an asylum of silence.

It is regrettable that some leaders can be so cynical as to impose their unfit candidate upon the nation. It is the height of irresponsibility for them to endorse one who cannot even face the public and face up to their problems. Like his movie persona, Poe must stand up and be heard. The people must know what he stands for, if he stands for anything at all. He cannot just be the Invisible Man without a platform or policies or even a personal appearance.

This year, the most important issue so far is the outcome of the presidential elections next May. The most important worry is that FPJ's mindless fans will elect their idol despite his limitations and shove the nation to perdition. If he really loves his country as he claims, Fernando Poe Jr. should avoid this tragic fate by retiring from the lists and returning to the movies. There can Da King continue to reign in his make-believe throne with minimum harm to the nation.

Be a man, FPJ, and withdraw your bid. Obey your wife.

Three sticks

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY is told about the captain of an ocean liner who began as a cabin boy and gradually worked his way up to the high position. His assistant who idolized him observed and emulated his every move. But there was one thing that puzzled him: every morning, the captain went to his cabin, opened the top drawer of his desk, took out a small slip of paper, read it with intensity, returned the paper to his desk and locked the drawer. Years later when the assistant took over, the first thing he did was to open the captain's drawer to discover what was written on that slip of paper. The paper had but one sentence on it: "Port is left; star board is right."

* * *

Today, the solemnity of the Epiphany, the Gospel (Mt. 2, 1-12) speaks about the wise men from the east who paid homage to the savior. They were great and wise, but their worldly wisdom was clothed with humility and obedience. In other words, they had power, but they allowed themselves to be guided by a greater power. They had an agenda. But theirs was just a personal agenda. If we are wise, we must acknowledge and rely on someone greater than us in this life. We must pursue a mission, and not just a personal ambition in this life.

* * *

Herod was also great and wise, but his was a greatness that wanted power and a wisdom that wanted more power. He relied on the people around him for guidance, and he began to believe that he needed no other power for strength. When pride sets in, a person is bound to fall. How many people have fallen because they believed or were made to believe that they were great and invincible? Take the road of humility, and you can not go wrong.

* * *

"From you, Bethlehem, will come a leader, the one who is to shepherd my people Israel." Where will the leader of the Philippines come from? From Pangasinan? From Bicol? From Cavite? At this point in time, your guess is as good as mine. But the deeper question is: Will this leader be the one to shepherd our people, or will he/she be the one to plunder our people as others have done in the past? Here, we can go beyond guessing, and look at the person, his/her track record and performance. And if I may add, the people and the company he/she keeps around.

* * *

Good governance is what our country needs today. Public office requires the servant to be the best of the best. That means that the public servant must be good and must know how to govern. We must look for leaders who have the goodness and know-how. A good, but not knowledgeable leader can be easily manipulated. On the other hand, a knowledgeable leader without a conscience can easily manipulate. Either way, it will lead to corruption. Wanted: A few good men and women who will start a new culture of public service in our country today.

* * *

Imagine the scene: The wise men arrive at the manger, open their bags, but instead of bringing out their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh, they bring out armalites and start firing at the helpless Holy Family. Pardon the morbid thought, but in reality, this scene happens in the Philippines whenever elections come. We see politicians with their "plastic" smiles, bringing bags of gifts and promises during the campaign. Once they win, however, they will start collecting from the helpless people one hundred times over what they have given out of their bags, which in the first place wasn't even theirs. Let us not choose greedy leaders who "kill" our helpless and innocent people once they are in power.

* * *

I am glad that somehow, in spite of difficult times, we were able to continue our family Chrismas gift-giving in Cangaluyan Island this year which was started by our parents in 1972. About 200 children came with their parents for the Mass, *merienda* and a joyful program. We didn't have much to share, but there was so much joy and laughter. It was a tiresome afternoon, but that was nothing compared to the joy of seeing children all over the place, so happy and grateful, and running home with an apple or a simple joy, and the experience of Christmas written all over their faces. Yes, indeed, very little is needed in life to be happy, both to Him who gives and to Him who receives.

* * *

Going back to our opening story, the ship captain teaches us the lesson to keep going back to the basics. As we begin the new year, let us all make the resolve to simply do good and avoid evil. Yes, we must remind ourselves again and again, that as we travel on, we must keep turning right, and keep going straight.

* * *

The wise men were wise because they followed the star. But, they were more wise because they stuck it out with each other. They did not go separate ways. As the saying goes, "United we stand, divided we fall." Amen.

* * *

It is interesting to note that after the wise men encountered the Baby Jesus, they returned to their country. The manger was so cozy and peaceful, but they had to go back to their realities and do their mission. Yes, the holidays are over. We must go back to work, and help build this nation.

* * *

A final note on the wise men: they returned to their country by another way. They did not go back to their old familiar ways. They had the courage to leave their comfort zones and try out new ways. Here's wishing all of us a fresh start and new beginning. Let us continue to have hope and dream dreams. And new ways to make our dreams come true.

* * *

A Moment With The Lord

Lord, remind me of the three sticks I need in the New Year: stick to the basics, stick out my neck, and stick it out. Amen.

Building bridges

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

IN IVO Andric's novel, "The Bridge on the River Drina," an old Bosnian Muslim describes the story of Creation in these words: "When Allah the Mindful and Compassionate, first created this world, the earth was smooth and even as a finely engraved plate. That displeased the devil, who envied humanity this gift of God. And so while the earth was still as it had come from God's hands, he stole up and scratched the face of God's earth with his nails as much and as deeply as he could."

This is how deep rivers and ravines were formed, dividing communities from each other and keeping people apart. Allah felt pity when he saw what the devil had done and he sent his angels to assist the people and make life easier for them.

"The people learned from the angels of God how to build bridges and therefore, after fountains, the greatest blessing is to build a bridge and the greatest sin is to interfere with it."

Other than crude shelters, the first structures built by man were bridges.

* * *

Since time immemorial, bridges have come to symbolize the yearnings as well as the fears of mankind and many novels have been written with the central theme revolving around these structures.

For instance, "The Bridges at Toko-Ri," a novel by James Michener, tells of a bridge that had to be destroyed at all cost during the Korean War. It represented a dangerous assignment for carrier-based pilots resulting ultimately in the death of the book's hero while on a bombing mission. "The Bridge at Andau," also by Michener, centers on a bridge located along the Austria-Hungary border. The bridge is used by refugees fleeing to the west from behind the Iron Curtain after the failed 1956 Hungarian uprising. On the other hand, "The Bridges of Madison County," serves as the backdrop in Robert James Waller's novel of a love affair between a lonely housewife and a roving photographer who in the end, realize the futility of their relationship and decide to go their separate ways.

The bridges that we are familiar with are usually those made of wood, steel or concrete. They were built to enable people to cross large bodies of water or deep ravines. But there are other barriers in different forms that need to be overcome if we are to have a better world. The gap between the rich and the poor, between the haves and the have nots, the ignorant and the knowledgeable, has to be narrowed if we are to slow down and stop the deterioration of the quality of life in our country.

Part of the process is the building of bridges of compassion and justice, bridges that will symbolize caring for and sharing with the less fortunate of society.

* * *

Two years ago, in response to a call from Cardinal Sin for "a change in ourselves, in our attitudes" a group of lay leaders from the Holy Name Society of the Mt. Carmel parish in Quezon City, came up with the idea of setting up a movement for self-transformation that would be based on the Commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The project chair, Johnny Hubilla, is a noted interior decorator with his own firm, Hubilla Design Group. Two others actively engaged in the movement are Technomotors head, Antonio Africa, and Jess Non, a retired ESSO executive. Both are past presidents of the Holy Name Society Chapter of Mt. Carmel.

In coming up with a name for the movement, they discarded several that were considered too religious or too pompous-sounding, and decided to focus instead on *courtesy*, which simply means a concern for others. If you have concern for others, you will not cheat them; you will not make "*kotong*"; you will not commit acts detrimental to the community. Thus was born the Courtesy Movement.

As of now, there are some 800 chapters in the Archdiocese of Manila actively engaged in the Courtesy Movement and hopefully, it will spread to other parts of the country. Obviously, we cannot rely on the current crop of political leaders to get the nation back on track to progress and prosperity. We need more builders of bridges and it is citizen-based movements that will ensure a brighter future for our people.

* * *

This is the time of the year for resolutions but life is too short to be hemmed in by a lot of parameters. My late father used to say quite often: "Too little of anything can turn out to be just as bad as too much. The key word is moderation." And so as we start a new year I would like to offer instead this blessing, which is of Irish origin:

"May you have many friends
And may they be as mature in taste, in health and color
As the contents of this glass
May you have warm words on a cold evening
A full moon on a dark night
And the road downhill all the way to your door
May every hair on your head turn into a candle
To light your way to heaven
And may God and His Holy Mother
Take the harm of the years away from you"

Don't do it, Loren!

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

GUESTING as "Da King" on the "Strictly Politics" New Year's special on ANC, hosted by Pia Hontiveros, comic impersonator Willy Nepomuceno was asked what his program of government was.

Well, he said, he had his plans for his inauguration all mapped out (talk of chutzpah!). He wouldn't want to burden the country with the expenses of this celebration, he said. So, "Da King" disclosed, he had made arrangements to make his inauguration into office "self-liquidating." He would be sworn into office at the Enchanted Kingdom theme park, he said, and he and "Inday," which is "Da King's" wife's nickname, would be dressed up in royal robes, the rites carried out with the appropriate fanfare and folderol. Tickets would be sold to the public, he said, and he was confident that ticket sales alone would be enough to cover all the expenses, thus saving the national coffers hundreds of thousands, if not millions of pesos.

But what of his economic program?, Pia asked. What did he plan to do to improve the economy? "Da King" said his priority was to "bring down the peso-dollar exchange rate," from the current P55 plus to $1, to "one is to one." One dollar to one peso?, Pia wanted to know. "One dollar to one kilo of pesos," "Da King" deadpanned.

Nepomuceno may have just carved out yet another franchise in his repertoire of roles, but unfortunately the laugh will be on us, the Filipino people. The scene at the Commission on Elections Friday is an ominous portent of how things will be during the reign of the real-life "Da King." With thousands showing up in front of the Comelec offices just to catch a glimpse of Fernando Poe Jr., his wife Susan Roces and his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda, the situation threatened to turn into chaos until the glitzy triumvirate agreed to give in to the fans' clamor and made an appearance from the Comelec balcony, waving to supporters like royalty acknowledging their delirious subjects.

"Da King's" Enchanted Kingdom scenario doesn't now seem all that farfetched.

* * *

THERE is no doubt that Poe presents the greatest threat to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's continued stay in Malacañang.

And there is no doubting as well the fact that Poe, the actor and icon, is almost universally loved by Filipinos of all ages. Though his box-office performance has been faltering of late, Poe continues to dominate the field of show business and entertainment, if only by his leadership and the awe with which his colleagues and associates behold him.

If you think Erap was popular, Poe is beyond popular. By a canny choice of roles and wise career management, he has managed to capture the popular imagination, transforming himself from a macho action star to the very symbol of Pinoy movies, exploiting the myth-making power of movies into personal capital.

And that precisely will be the trouble with a Poe campaign. His appeal to the voting public will not be that of a candidate for public office seeking to prove himself worthy of their votes and trust. But rather, of a movie idol appealing to fans to translate their love and devotion to him in the form of votes. Of course, the cynical may say, that's what all candidates seek to do, which is why they court the cult of celebrity as assiduously as they do. But signs are that the Poe campaign, because he is indeed "Da King" in the hearts of Pinoy moviegoers, will exploit this blurring of boundaries between reality and fantasy, civic responsibility and fanaticism to far more cynical lengths.

* * *

I CAN guess at the motivation of all those political has-beens and discredited officials who're now hitching their wagons to "Da King's" star. And I'm told that Poe was finally convinced to overcome his personal distaste for the public life by the massive show of faith by his followers, especially by spending their own money to organize themselves instead of waiting for handouts or rewards. Such solid support is enough to go to one's head—and heart.

What I want to know is what Senator Legarda is doing by his side. The cynical want to know what's so mystifying. The answer is simple, they say. Legarda is there simply because she knows running with Poe gives her the best chance to position herself for the presidency come 2010. She gave herself away when she said, to explain her breakaway from the coalition supporting GMA, that there was no way she was going to be chosen as the President's running mate because the voters would not go for a slate composed of two women.

The trouble with me I guess is that I still believe Legarda is in politics for deeper reasons than are immediately apparent. She has shown her commitment to women's issues, placing a higher priority on them, and paying more attention to these concerns than most other legislators or officials do. My guess is that despite her good intentions, Loren's ambition blinds her to the deeper implications of her actions, leading many to suspect her principles exist merely in the service of political momentum.

* * *

AND now Poe's—and Erap's—supporters are demanding that Loren apologize to the former president for the role she played in the impeachment hearings.

I can't see how she can issue a public apology for what she did without being stripped of the last shreds of credibility she managed to gain precisely because of the whole impeachment crisis.

My guess is that loss of credibility is the last of Loren's concerns, as well as that of her strategists. If Poe wins and she steps into the throne of political consort, people will soon forget her cha-cha-cha with her avowed principles. But not everyone will forget so easily, and in the name of all that is decent in politics—which is not much, I admit—please, Loren, don't do it!

Everyday poets

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

"TO BE the poets of our life—first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters," as my favorite philosopher puts it, has always been for me the best formulation of a New Year's wish. The metaphor evokes images of meticulous composition and subtle artistry, of wit and beauty, in all the things we do, starting with the most common pursuits. Beauty is not the work of professional artists alone, and is not found only in concert halls and galleries. It is a quality that belongs to all of us whenever we make a conscious effort to create style in the course of our otherwise ordinary lives.

I had glimpses of such abundant beauty in Pampanga just before Christmas when the group ArtiStaRita Foundation treated the townsfolk of Sta. Rita to a serenade of traditional and new compositions of Kapampangan folk songs. The group, formed in December 2001, combined the talents of the town's singers, composers, costume designers and choreographers to bring out one of the most accomplished performances I have ever seen on any stage in the country. The performers were a mix of schoolchildren, teachers, housewives, carpenters, farmers, bank employees and other professionals who shared a common passion—singing. To prepare for this one-night performance, they followed a strict schedule of weekend rehearsals under the leadership of three incredible artists: Andy Alviz, Recy Pineda and Randy del Rosario.

Kapampangan music is often equated with the popular signature folk song "Atin ku pung singsing" (I had a ring), which, in its literal sense, may sound shallow and stupid. The song tells of a ring inherited from a dear mother. The owner kept it in a safe, but lost it. Inconsolable, she tells the world that her heart now belongs to the one who finds the ring.

The artists of Sta. Rita have given this song a new meaning. By their efforts, they have found the ring of Pampango culture, and all of us who grew up in this landlocked province of farmers and artisans owe them our hearts. They have brought us back home to a language and a tradition now fast being engulfed not only by Metro Manila pop culture and Taglish, but also by Western-driven globalization. From the din of "*Otso-otso*" and the pit of "*Spaghetting pababa*," a paper kite has taken flight. It sends a clear message to all who care to listen: a people must express their artistry and develop their culture from what they already have and know best. Thus, the ArtisStaRita serenade begins grandly with the enriched tones of the ditty "*O yan na ing papel*" (There goes the paper).

There is undoubtedly in all these songs a deep and recurrent pride in one's ethnic roots. When the nation seems headed for nowhere, it seems natural for the centrifugal tones of ethnic identity to acquire greater resonance. One of the stirring numbers in the Sta. Rita program is Andy Alviz's original composition "Kapampangan ku" (I am a Kapampangan). At first blush, this song may sound like an ethnocentric paean, but it is not. This powerful song is rather a tribute to the courage and resilience of the people of the province who rose from the Mt. Pinatubo explosion and lahar devastation of the '90s. The refrain goes: "*Kapampangan ku, daya ampong kaladua ku/ Sese naku ning Ginu, miyabe-abe tamu*" (I am a Kapampangan, blood and soul/ I am God's beloved, let us stand together).

This kind of culture is not a simple return to ancestral beginnings. This is not nativistic revivalism, or mere nostalgia. The sentiments, values, and images are the same ones we encountered as children, but the words and the music are brought up to date. The tones and movements of Broadway, for example, are recreated and interspersed with traditional strains in the most astonishing way. Xenophobic anti-globalism is nowhere to be found here. There is only everywhere an ear, and an eye, for style, beauty and originality.

A visit to Pampanga is never complete without food. The ArtiStaRita Christmas Eve serenade began with dinner and ended with a midnight snack. Dinner was simple, but the setting was exquisite. The performance was held in front of the elegant 1920s mansion of the Guanzon family (the setting for Laurice Guillen's "Tanging Yaman"), while dinner was served in the large garden at the back. The beef and pork *asado* revived all the taste buds of my childhood. This was exactly how my late mother prepared this dish. The snack included steaming *arroz caldo* and *puto bumbong*, and thick native chocolate made from finely ground cacao seeds and peanuts. The guests sat around cloth-covered round tables.

One would probably find such food these days in any of the fine Pampango restaurants in Metro Manila and San Fernando or Angeles. But it would be difficult to replicate the respectful and solicitous way in which the old townsfolk of Pampanga receive their guests. Urbanization has not erased the nobility and subtlety of their manners.

The best time to visit Pampanga is during a town fiesta. On that day, all the poetry of the town is to be found in its kitchens. Dec. 30, Rizal Day, was also fiesta time in Betis, where I grew up. On this day my three sisters—Raquel, Agnes, and Marivic—searched their culinary memory to bring out an array of inventive dishes to serve to our guests. They worked with the same basic tastes and ingredients, but they improvised, fused tastes, and experimented. No one doubted that the flavors were distinctly Kapampangan. The careful style was there, the identity was discernible, but amid the traditional fare there were new dishes. After lunch, the neighborhood brass band serenaded the guests. They could have just clapped their hands, but they danced. Such is the poetry of everyday life.

* * *

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Political realignment

COMMENTARY

Raul J. Palabrica

WITH THE PRESIDENCY as the plum prize, some 18,000 national and local positions will be voted on in the May 10 elections. For the first time in 17 years, a sitting president will take to the campaign trail to solicit the people's mandate to run the country for another six years.

Although the 1987 Constitution did not bar then President Cory Aquino from seeking reelection, she opted to stay out of the polls and uphold the spirit of its one-term-only provision. Edsa II has made the same opportunity available to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Until Ms Macapagal backtracked from her Dec. 30, 2002 commitment not to aspire for a fresh six-year term, many thought history would repeat itself on her. Her change of mind will test the viability of our electoral system.

She is not obliged to turn over the country's governance to Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. or anybody else while she pursued her ambition to be elected president in her own right. She will continue to be in command of the vast resources of the government; an advantage that her opponents know will not be easy to overcome.

As of today, the fight for the presidency looms as a contest among Ms Macapagal, former Education Secretary Raul Roco, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Although Brother Eddie Villanueva of the Jesus is Lord Movement claims to have the support of five million members, his ability to put this following behind his political ambition is a big question mark. Since the Commonwealth period, no religious leader in the country who aspired for the presidency has won. It is doubtful if he has the charisma and means to change history.

Premature

It is not surprising that the Lakas-CMD party, which is supporting the Macapagal-Sen. Noli De Castro ticket, has expressed satisfaction over the filing of the separate candidacies of Lacson and Poe under the banner of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino. A split in the opposition ranks is expected to redound to the advantage of the administration party.

If Lacson were to be believed, he would rather complete his senatorial term than slide down to be Poe's vice-presidential candidate. On the other hand, Poe has stated that his quest for the presidency is unwavering. The idea of tempering his political ambition to the vice-presidency is farthest from his mind. To show his resolve, he chose Sen. Loren Legarda to be his running mate.

This is not the first time that the opposition in a presidential election had more than one of its members vie for the privilege to be the standard bearer. A similar situation happened in the 1998 elections. The principal presidential contenders then were Vice President Joseph Estrada, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Edgardo Angara and Sen. Raul Roco.

Initially, Macapagal rejected the idea of teaming up with De Venecia, the administration party's candidate. She believed her strong showing in the surveys justified her gunning for the presidency under her Kampi party. But when the financial support promised by her backers did not come, she accepted De Venecia's invitation to be his running mate.

Angara found himself in the same boat. He thought that as leader of the opposition, he had the right to carry its colors for the presidency. Once, when asked by a journalist if he was willing to be Estrada's vice-presidential candidate, Angara replied that since he is more intelligent than Estrada, it is only logical that he be named standard bearer and not the other way round.

Second fiddle

However, when it became apparent that his ambitions were going nowhere, he ate crow and agreed to play second fiddle to the man he considered intellectually inferior. The re-alignment of political plans eventually resulted in Estrada winning over De Venecia and Macapagal humbling Angara in the polls.

A reprise of the 1998 scenario cannot be discounted in the May 10 elections.

History will most likely repeat itself in Lacson. The man who once said he "hates politics and politicians" but later ran for senator stands to gain more by giving up his presidential ambitions and try his luck instead in the vice-presidential derby. As Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. graphically puts it, Poe is like a strong typhoon against which Lacson does not stand a chance. Pimentel thinks Lacson's chances of winning the vice-presidency will improve in a team up with Poe.

Looking ahead, a Lacson victory in the vice-presidential contest, regardless of who is elected president, would give him ample breathing space from the Kuratong Baleleng case that continues to hound him. The justice department may not be as enthusiastic as it is now in running after the man who is a heartbeat away from the presidency. But as a mere senator in a second Macapagal administration, Lacson could feel the full heat of the government's prosecution arm.

There will be no shame in Lacson's changing his mind about his presidential dreams. In the first place, politicians are not known for keeping their word or feeling remorse for broken promises. Besides, he will only be following what his political nemesis in the LDP, Angara, did in 1998 to the man who made it possible for Lacson to gain public attention.

Adjustments

In Roco's case, there is no gainsaying what he'll do if his campaign starts to flounder. A Poe-Lacson team-up could reduce the presidential race to a three-cornered fight. In that scenario, Roco will need all the funds and resources he can muster to counteract the built-in advantages of a sitting president and a candidate who enjoys the support of a united opposition.

Between an unknown Poe and somebody he had worked with in the Senate and the executive, Roco may not be averse to the idea of casting his lot instead with Ms Macapagal if he feels his chances of winning the presidency are gravely imperiled. He can take a leaf from the experience of his rivals in the 1998 elections and look forward to receiving a warm reception from the Lakas party that asked him earlier to team up with Ms Macapagal.

If any of these political realignments happens, the vice-presidential hopefuls—De Castro, Legarda, former Rep. Herminio Aquino (for Roco) and whoever Lacson chooses as running mate—may have no choice but bite the bullet and settle for whatever financial or political concessions they can get from their standard bearers.

De Castro can go back to the Senate. Legarda can run for reelection to the Senate. Aquino can resume his task as Roco's spokesperson. In this country, vice-presidential candidates are expendable. They are mere pawns in the presidential game.

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Editor **Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.**

Should a truth commission look into the CPP purges?

SURVIVORS and families of the victims are calling for the setting up of a body that will look into the series of anti-infiltration campaigns the Communist Party of the Philippines conducted in the 1980s against suspected government spies.

Hundreds of members and supporters of the CPP died in the anti-infiltration campaigns. Thirty-two people died in "Cadena de Amor" in the Quezon-Bicol Zone (1982); about 30 in "Takip Silim" in South Quezon (1985); from a low estimate of 400 to a high estimate of at least 1,100 in "Ahos" in Mindanao (1985-1986); 66 in "Operation Missing Link" in Southern Tagalog (1988); and at least 2 in "Olympia" in Metro Manila (1988-1989). Other campaigns were conducted in Northern and Central Luzon, and in Eastern Visayas.

The CPP later acknowledged that the victims had not been established as government spies.

Buried in unmarked graves, many of the remains have not been found. Many of the relatives of the victims have not been informed of what happened to their loved ones.

Supporting calls for the setting up of a truth commission is President Macapagal-Arroyo. "As part of the national reconciliation process, I am in favor of a truth commission which will look into such travesties of justice and see to it that the culprits own up to these," she said.

A CPP cadre, a former council member of the National Democratic Front, an underground group which includes the CPP, is proposing the setting up of a CPP body to identify and honor the victims, reach out to the families, seek redress of grievances and put a closure to each case.

Whatever form the body will take, one thing is clear to the various sectors seeking closure and justice: the truth must be told.

Commissioning the truth

By Theodore O. Te
Coordinator, Free Legal Assistance Group
National Capital Region

My first reaction to the question, "should a truth commission be convened to investigate the reported purges within the left?" was really one of disbelief—as if we don't have too many commissions supposedly investigating the truth about all sorts of matters already.

Honestly, with the Senate, the House, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Ombudsman, the different quasi-judicial agencies, the Philippine National Police, the courts, the Department of Justice, and the occasional ad hoc "commissions" that sprout after a particularly sensational natural or man-made disaster, there doesn't seem to be any need for another commission, even if it is called a Truth Commission.

We are not strangers to "truth commissions", i.e., investigative bodies convened specifically for the purpose of determining the truth of an incident or event.

Agrava

The country has had quite a few in its recent history: the Agrava Commission investigating the Aquino-Galman double murder during the Marcos era; the Davide Commission investigating the series of coup attempts during the Aquino administration and the latest incarnation, the Feliciano Commission, investigating the Oakwood mutiny. Post 1986, calls for a Truth Commission were aired to investigate the Marcos human rights abuses but they remained calls.

In the wake of reports of the purges committed by the Left, the calls for a Truth Commission have again been aired. While I do not discount the importance of discovering the truth about these purges, I do not believe that convening a Truth Commission would be practical as well as practicable.

Families

It would not be practical because the truth may also be determined already by resorting to the other existing entities that can investigate the matter. Families of those killed may resort to filing criminal charges against those identified to be responsible. In the process, the investigative process mandated by law is supposed to determine the truth of these purges.

It would also not be practicable because convening an independent and separate Truth Commission—similar to the Agrava, Davide and Feliciano Commissions—to investigate these purges would require for its effectiveness that all parties involved recognize and submit to the Commission.

I do not see how those identified or identifiable as having committed the purges would come around to recognize or submit to the Truth Commission.

Recognition

Without such recognition, it would be a futile exercise and in the end, any such Truth Commission may end up the same way as the previous commissions—Agrava, Davide and Feliciano—which investigate and render a report but which eventually fail to become truly relevant because the "truth" is never actually discovered.

There are more than sufficient mechanisms under the law to discover the truth about these purges. If the truth is truly out there, then it can be discovered through the already redundant truth—determining entities and agencies.

It does not really matter which entity or agency investigates—the truth, unvarnished and real, will be found. Even for the purges, there is no need for a Truth Commission unless the intent is to commission the truth and that would lead to another question altogether.

(The writer is a law professor, private practitioner and human rights lawyer. These comments are his personal opinion and are not official policy statements of the Free Legal Assistance Group.)

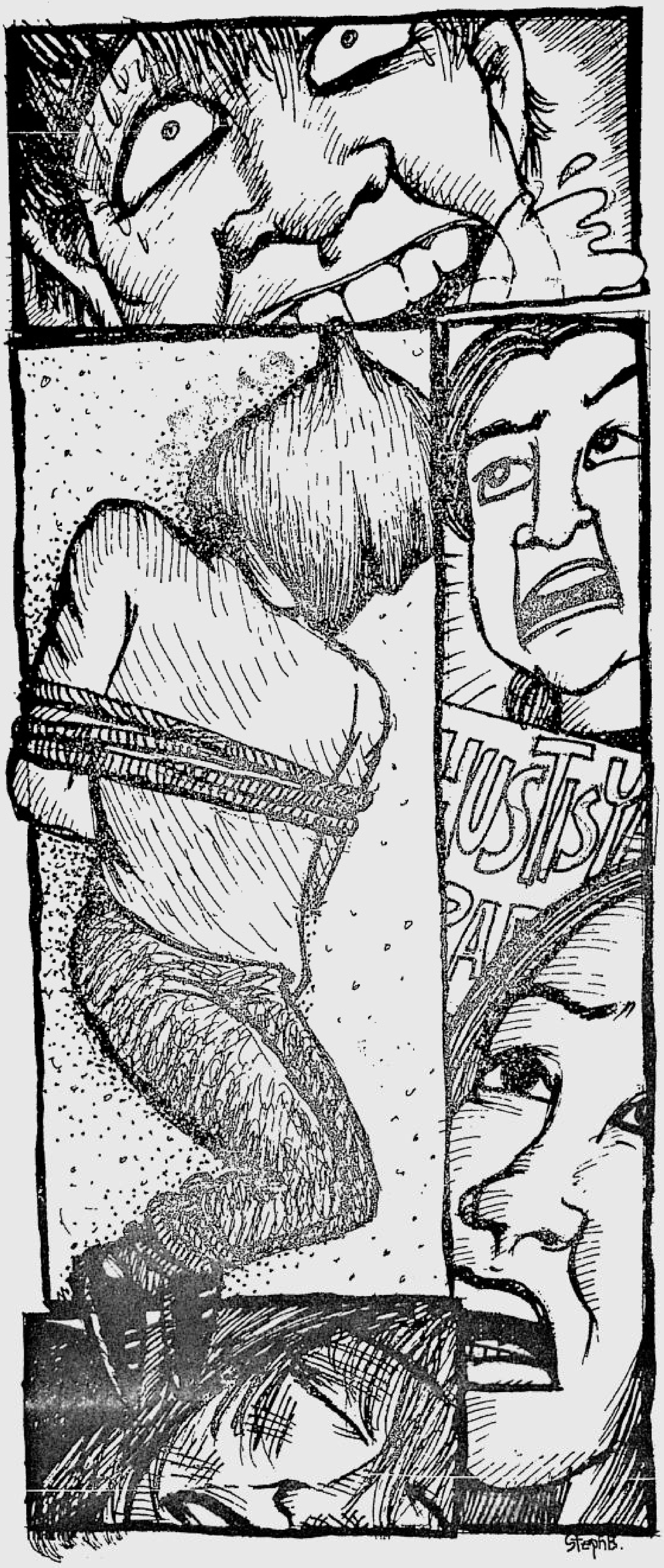

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Survivors, families seek justice

By Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel
Member, Council of Leaders
Peace Advocates for Truth,
Justice and Healing

At the Conference on "Memory, Truth-telling and the Pursuit of Justice" (part of the Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship project), which was convened by the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, among others, in 1999 at the Ateneo de Manila University, among the subjects of discussion and recommendation were the experiences of various countries in putting up peace commissions. Also discussed was the possible model that the Philippines could adopt.

One of the outputs was a proposal to form a body that would formulate such a model. A follow-up conference on "Interrogating Reconciliation" in 2001 pursued the discussion.

Models

Models such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa upheld the primary responsibility of the previous apartheid state for its agents' violations of the rights of citizens, and also ascribed accountability for the violations by liberation movements such as the African National Congress.

Documentation has grown in the past few years of rights violations by both states and non-state actors in the context of peace and healing and reconciliation processes in post-conflict and democratic transitions.

A Truth Commission covering also human rights and humanitarian law violations such as anti-infiltration purges by non-state actors such as the New People's Army is an idea whose time is around two decades overdue.

Accountability

Surely even the law of contradictions cited by Jose Maria Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, in his e-mail interview with Juan V. Sarmiento Jr. operates to a certain degree within the realm of human agency and therefore accountability.

Ismael, a former member of the National Council of the National Democratic Front, wrote in an article that accompanied the last part of Sarmiento's special report on the CPP purges that "organizations such as the PATH (Peace Advocates for Truth, Justice and Healing), the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency of the United States) and the Dutch intelligence will always find the anti-infiltration purges a convenient theme against the party.

What the victims and survivors of the purges and their families suffered and continue to suffer is and was much more than an inconvenience that they can painlessly recall for a narrow and shallow reason as maligning the CPP.

Closure

His identification of PATH in the company especially of the CIA seeks to discredit the organization, but cannot invalidate the victims, survivors and families' desire for the truth, justice and closure.

His suggestion for the CPP to form a body "to pursue its declarations and decisions regarding the anti-infiltration campaigns" is a constructive one that can be paralleled by initiatives of peace and human rights—humanitarian law organizations, including the creation of a Truth Commission.

Would the CPP participate in the processes of such a Commission? Part of the challenge would lie in accepting one of the premises of exacting accountability from non-state actors for respecting the rights and dignity of human beings: the reaffirmation and recovery of the basic humanism, which underlies all genuine movements for change and which, even or especially under the most intense pressure, we must never sacrifice.

Rather than be constrained by any other organizational considerations of the CPP or government, our efforts to come to terms with the purges must focus on the victims, survivors and bereaved families. In this way, their sufferings and deaths, their survival and transcendence can be part of the energy needed to build a just and lasting peace.

(Hontiveros-Baraquel is a member of the government panel holding talks with the National Democratic Front. The CPP is part of the NDF.)

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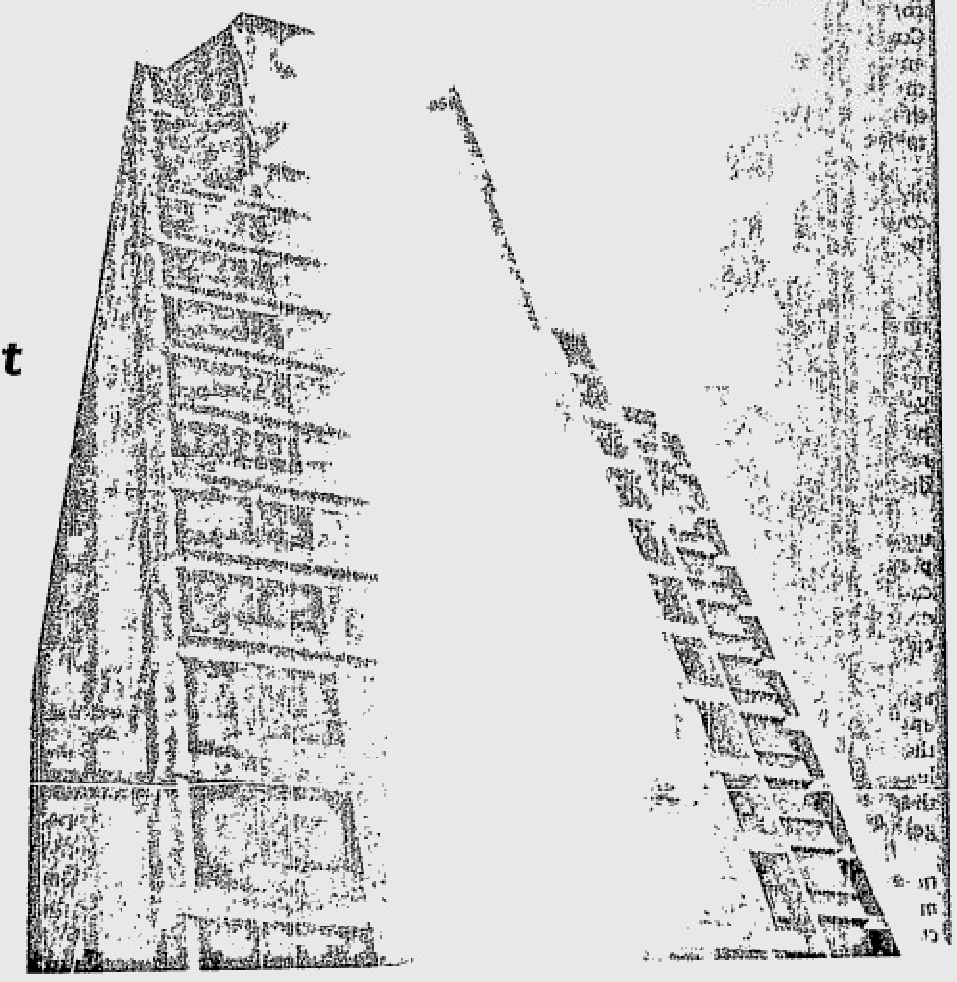

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Lito Osmeña defends Roco's pick for veep

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Former Cebu governor Emilio "Lito" Osmeña yesterday defended the choice of their alliance to field former Tarlac representative Herminio Aquino as the running mate of Raul Roco.

Osmeña said Aquino was chosen based on qualifications and not on popularity.

Osmeña said he was in fact "overjoyed" that Roco made a decision to choose a running mate based on his qualifications.

Osmeña said Aquino is 54 years old, holds a master degree in business administration, runs several businesses of his own, a former congressman for 11 years, a former vice governor for two terms and was able to serve the Cabinet for one and a half year during the Cory Aquino administration.

"That's a kind of vice president that the nation needs; someone who is trusted by the president since he is also trusted by Roco," Osmeña said partly in Cebuano yesterday.

Osmeña, who heads Promdi, which is one of the parties that comprised the Alliance of Hope backing the presidential of Roco, was initially considered as Roco's running mate. He was in fact on top of the list of his prospective running mate as Roco had wanted somebody from the south to even up his coming from Luzon.

Osmeña said there was a long discussion on Dec. 29 during their tripartite meeting at the Manila Hotel on who should be Roco's running mate.

Osmeña said Roco and other members of the party repeatedly insisted that he should be the candidate for vice president.

But Osmeña said he declined the offer because he believed that he could serve better the Roco campaign by concentrating on getting votes for him in the Cebuano-speaking regions in the Visayas and Mindanao.

But the bigger reason, Lito revealed, was because he found himself "too old" to run for vice president.

"I am already 65 years old and by the time I will be ready to be president, I'm already 72 and *mora man ug pre-departure area na kana* (its that's already the pre-departure area) and it is not fair to the nation and to me," Osmeña said yesterday.

Lito said that his being at a "retiring age" could only give a bad image to their alliance that wanted to give "hope" to the nation.

He said he suggested that the alliance should "look one generation below us."

Osmeña said he also insisted that the running mate of Roco should also be a real economist. Aquino, he said, perfectly fit the bill.

Osmeña said Roco called him up early on Dec. 30 and told him that he had chosen Aquino, the head of the Aksyon Demokratiko in Luzon and one of Roco's closest allies.

ANTI-INFILTRATION HYSTERIA

CPP says it's correcting errors

LUCENA CITY—The Communist Party of the Philippines said it has taken steps "to substantially correct the errors and roots of the anti-infiltration hysteria committed by those who violated Party and revolutionary principles in the '80s."

In a statement furnished the INQUIRER, the CPP said it has punished its "unrepentant principal perpetrators" and put under disciplinary action those who took part in its implementation.

The CPP Information Bureau also clarified reports that there were not only seven party cadres who were meted out disciplinary actions.

"Even before the Central Committee disciplined the principal wrongdoers, the regional committees and other lower organs had already taken disciplinary measures against those who made mistakes," the local communist said.

The CPP explained that many of the principal perpetrators of the purges did not want to face the music for their crimes and other serious responsibilities in the anti-infiltration campaign and other grave errors.

"They turned their backs to the CPP in the height of the rectification campaign in the early 1990s and are now among ringleaders of the small groups whose sole mission is to wreck the CPP and, in order to cover up their own crimes and errors, and try to maliciously pass off the responsibility as an 'original sin' of the CPP itself," the CPP said.

The CPP claimed that it has taken decisive steps and ensured all-out measures to indemnify the victims and their relatives and extend the necessary material, medical and social support for their rehabilitation.

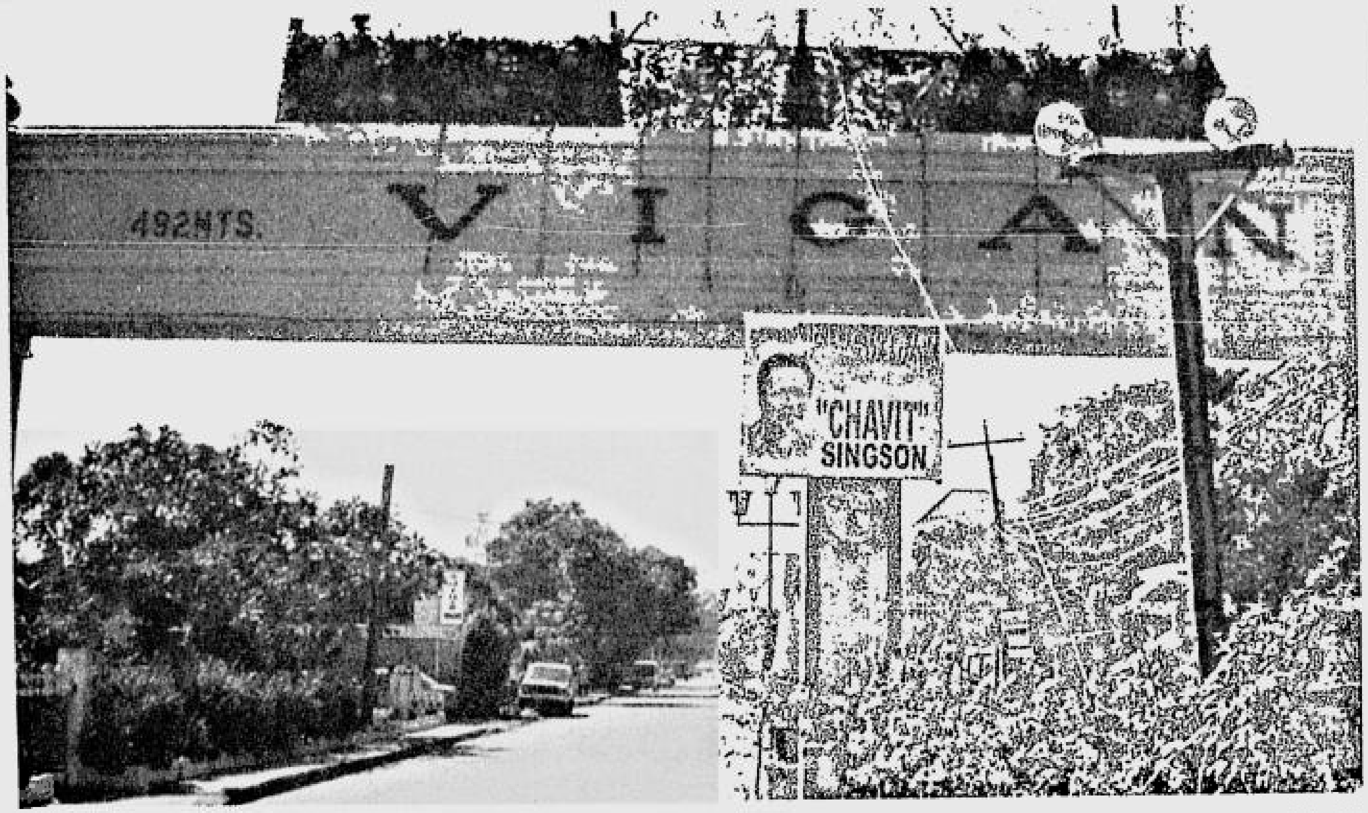
The CPP pointed out that the unrepentant comrades are now maliciously collaborating to instrumentalize the experiences of victims of the anti-infiltration campaigns as venues to attack the party in the same way that the Central Intelligence Agency and the Armed Forces of the Philippines psywar departments and operatives have been using the Cambodian 'Killing Fields' as propaganda materials against the NPA.

"They form pseudoreformist groups and institutions, publish materials that mix distortions and rehashed sensationalism with part of the truth and launch anti-CPP campaigns, funded by international anti-communist organizations," the communist group said.

In an earlier interview, communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal called the report as part of the continuing script of the military to demonize the revolutionary forces based on their anti-insurgency plan "Bantay-Laya."

He added: "That kind of news report is part of the psychological component of the military plan."

Rosal stressed that as far as the CPP is concerned, "the dark moments of the anti-infiltration campaign was already a thing of the past." *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI PHOTO

COMEBACK
Motorists entering Vigan City will not miss an oversized poster of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson hung on the marker leading to the city. Singson, who made waves by exposing the alleged jueteng *payola* of his former friend Joseph Estrada, is making a comeback in the province and was reported running again for governor.

Cop probed for New Year gun-firing

BACOLOD CITY—A policeman in Cadiz City, Negros Oriental is facing investigation for allegedly firing his gun on New Year's Eve.

Police Officer 3 Leonero Leonardo, a member of the Cadiz City Police Station, was arrested early morning of Jan. 1 in his residence in Barangay Villamonte, Bacolod City, for indiscriminately firing his service firearm.

He was disarmed of his .45 caliber pistol by his colleagues who brought him to Police Precinct 4 for investigation.

SPO4 Francisco Duario, also a *Purok* president, reported to the Bacolod Police Precinct 4 that Leonardo fired his gun in his home.

Recovered from the scene were two deformed slugs, four empty shells and live ammunition of the .45 caliber pistol.

Senior Supt. Vicente Ponteras, Negros Occidental provincial police director, said Leonardo would be facing administrative charges for violating the orders of Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane.

Penal code

Article 155 of the Revised Penal Code, states that "any policeman, fireman or jailer found to have indiscriminately fired his gun shall be criminally prosecuted and administratively charged for violation of the National Police Commission Memorandum Circular 93-024."

Ponteras has ordered the Investigation Branch of the Negros Occidental Police Provincial Office to investigate Leonardo, who was turned over to Chief Inspector Edgardo Ordaniel, police chief of Cadiz City.

A day before the New Year's eve celebration, Ponteras led in taping shut the muzzles of guns issued to policemen assigned at Camp Alfredo Montelibano Sr. in Bacolod City. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

3 rivals challenge Piñol for N. Cotabato gov

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Three individuals are challenging North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol in the May 2004 elections.

Rolando Felonio Sr., former mayor of Magpet town, Macalilang Garcia and Joelito Fortich have filed their certificates of candidacy before the provincial office of the Commission on Elections hoping to wrest the governorship of the province from Piñol who would be seeking his last term.

Felonio is running under the banner of Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) while Garcia and Fortich are independent candidates.

Piñol, who filed his candidacy Friday, is seeking another term under the coalition of Lakas-CMD and Lihok-Cotabato, a local party that brought him to the provincial capitol in 1998.

Speaking before his party mates at the provincial capitol Piñol warned them from paying campaign fees to rebel-infested areas of the province.

He said conceding to the rebels' demand of campaign fees to gain access to populated yet bailiwick of communist and Moro rebels would only embarrass the government.

"It would project rebels' superiority over the government's law enforcement capability," Piñol told his party mates.

He added that Lakas-CMD-Lihok Cotabato coalition candidates who would pay would face party expulsion.

Coalition candidates, according to Piñol, would undergo drug test and anybody found positive would be removed from the party right away.

The journalist-turned-politician also urged the poll body to closely watch the towns of Kabacan, Banisilan and Pikit, areas where intense rivalry occurred in previous elections.

In North Cotabato's first congressional district, former Cong. Anthony Dequina would challenge incumbent Rep. Lala Talinio-Santos, a first-termer.

Dequina is running under the banner of Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. He failed in his gubernatorial bid last elections against Piñol.

In Maguindanao, at least six candidates are vying to become mayor of Kabuntalan.

What's in the marshy and war-torn town nobody could answer among the six aspirants who have filed their certificates of candidacy before Lawyer Lintang Bedol, Maguindanao election supervisor.

"There's nothing special in Kabuntalan except our desire to serve our people," said Lawyer Suharto Ambolodto.

Five of the six aspirants belonged to Lakas-CMD ruling party and all earned the nomination from party officials.

"It's a free zone and everybody agreed to make the balloting peaceful and orderly," said Maguindanao provincial administrator engineer Norie Unas.

Aside from Ambolodto, who once served as acting Maguindanao election officer in 2001, other candidates include incumbent Mayor Susan Samad, Ramil Dilangalen, Paluma Mohiden Sebangan, Mike Fermin and Alimudin Mentok Macacua, younger brother of Sammy Gambar, chief of staff of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Samad said Kabuntalan is a small town described by many as marshy yet rich in natural resources, including gas.

Historically, elections in Kabuntalan were marred with cheating, bombing, ballot snatching and disenfranchisement of voters by skirmishes. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

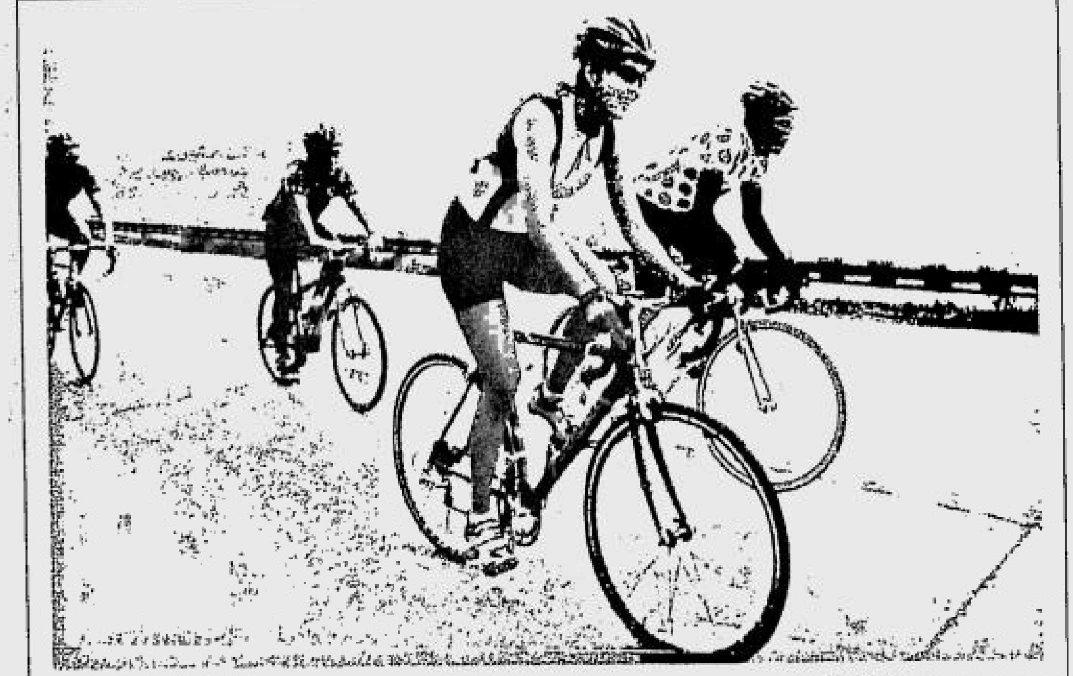


PHOTO FROM BUTCH SEBASTIAN

BIKE FOR HOPE
Lawyer Pia Cayetano (in yellow jersey) leads cyclists in the "Bike for Hope," a 50-km cycling event from Pangasinan to Baguio City aimed at raising funds for the Senator Rene Cayetano Liver Foundation. The foundation was set up in tribute to the late senator who died of a liver ailment. It seeks to provide funds for liver transplants of poor patients. Pia, the senator's daughter, has taken the path of the late Cayetano.

1 killed, 4 hurt in grenade blast

By Charlie Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

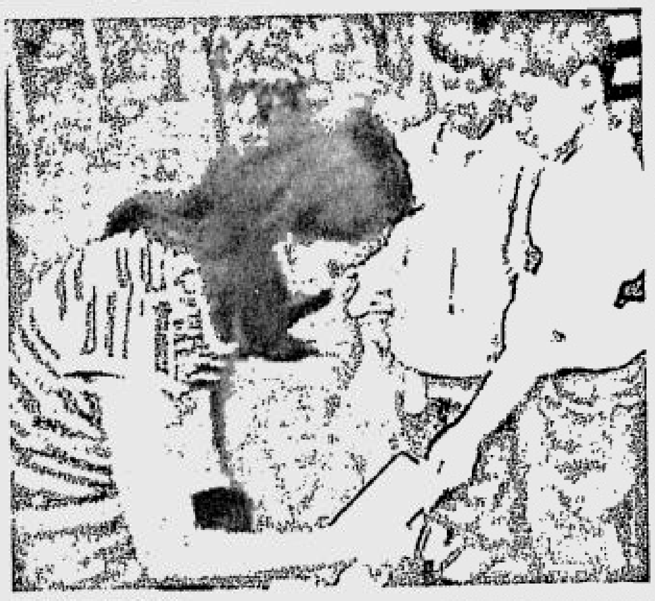
COTABATO CITY—A man playing with a live grenade died while four others were seriously injured when it accidentally exploded at a housing subdivision in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao on Friday night.

Mauladin Macacua, one of those wounded, said a certain Abe Nalon of Barangay Semba was playing with a grenade as he approached a group of villagers gathered at a roadside of SPDA Sarilikha Village.

Nalon, who appeared drunk, removed the grenade's safety lever and dropped it accidentally on the ground.

"As he tried to pick it up, the grenade went off, killing him," Macacua said.

Police are still trying to determine why Nalon, a civilian, had a grenade in his possession.



CONTRIBUTED BY AL TRINIDAD

GIFT-GIVING
Gio Reyes demonstrates the art of sharing during a gift-giving affair in Barangay Pangao, Lipa, Batangas last week. The father of the two kids, ATR World Best Wines and Spirits executives Dr. Ruel Reyes and Gene Cortes of San Pablo City, who brought cash and goodies for poor farm children, also vowed to help stop the foul and hazardous smell from a big piggery that continues to cause serious respiratory ailments among many children in the area.

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER *Mindanao*

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Nico A. Alconaba**

2003 not so good a year for Muslims

By Samira Ali Gutoc
Contributor

THE YEAR 2003 started and ended with tragic events in the Muslim world, starting off with the declaration of war on Iraq on March 19 and punctuated by an earthquake in Iran, killing thousands of people.

On a local scene, Muslims faced stories of mass evacuations, arrests of suspected terrorists, shaky peace talks and deaths of prominent Muslim personalities.

Some legal successes were in the offing with the assumption of a Moro party-list, Anak Mindanaw and the approval of the Regional Economic Development Authority (Reza) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The year started with a gesture of goodwill to Muslims with President Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment of Simeon Datumanong to the Department of Justice (DOJ) on January 6. But this act, making him the only Muslim cabinet member, was dimmed by clashes between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in Central Mindanao, resulting in massive evacuations in the next month.

Almost 400,000 persons have been displaced by the all-out war policy by then Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, which began on the eve of Eidul Adha, a religious Muslim holiday on February 6. This led to evacuations of civilians in the Maguindanao provinces of Pagalungan and Pikit, dramatized by Bakwit Power, a local "people power exodus" of civilians looking for safety in nearby towns. Threats of tagging the MILF as terrorists, suspected of coddling the Pentagon criminal gang in Liguasan marsh, were dropped following GRP-MILF peace talks facilitator Malaysia's request that such would affect peace talks.

On March 4, Davao City was rocked with the bombing of its airport leading to the arrest of Muslims suspected to have links with the MILF. In its aftermath, grenades were lobbed at local mosques.

Another bombing hit the Sasa wharf in Davao City on April 2. The next months would see bomb blasts in public places like markets and the NIA office in Cotabato.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman offer flowers and candles to victims of the Koronadal bombing in this file photo.

AQUILES ZONIO/PDI FILE

On April 23-24, Muslim legislators, led by Basilan Rep. Gerry Salappuddin and former Department of Education Undersecretary Macapanton Abbas (now deceased), and NGO leaders convened for the 1st Philippine Muslim Leader's Forum (PMLF) at Midtown Hotel in Manila. They formalized federalism as a proposal. The issue of Nur Misuari, detained at a Laguna jail, cropped up among MNLF supporters in the forum. Mindanao Natin, a program of the President, was also launched in the same forum.

On July 13, MILF chair Ustadz Salamat Hashim, passed away in Butig, Lanao del Sur. Only reported in mid-August by the MILF's Executive Committee, his passing away was seen as a "tactic" for a smooth transition from the long-standing chair (since 1970s) to a new leader, MILF peace panel chair Murad Ebrahim.

The next day, July 14, Indonesian terrorist Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi escaped from his detention cell at Camp Crame, raising a regional alert on terrorism. On that same day, a Basilan youth politician, Mujiv Hataman, was proclaimed party-list representative of Anak Mindanaw after a long pending petition before the Commission on Elections.

The dramatic Oakwood incident on July 27 led to revelations by mutineers that the Davao bombings were the "handiwork by the military."

On August 15, ARMM Governor Parouk Hussin signed the Reza into law, providing for tax holidays and incentives to businessmen to invest in the ARMM.

September 2-3 saw the launching of the ARMM Business Congress in Marawi City.

Septemer 16 saw the death of an eloquent Bangsamoro intellectual Macapanton Abbas, 61 then serving at the Department of Education.

Two days later, Lanao del Norte finally hosted the Palarong Pambansa after a year of delay due to perceived peace and order problems in the said province.

The whole of September saw forums in the cities of Manila, Cotabato, Zamboanga and Marawi on "Islam and Democracy" organized by the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy.

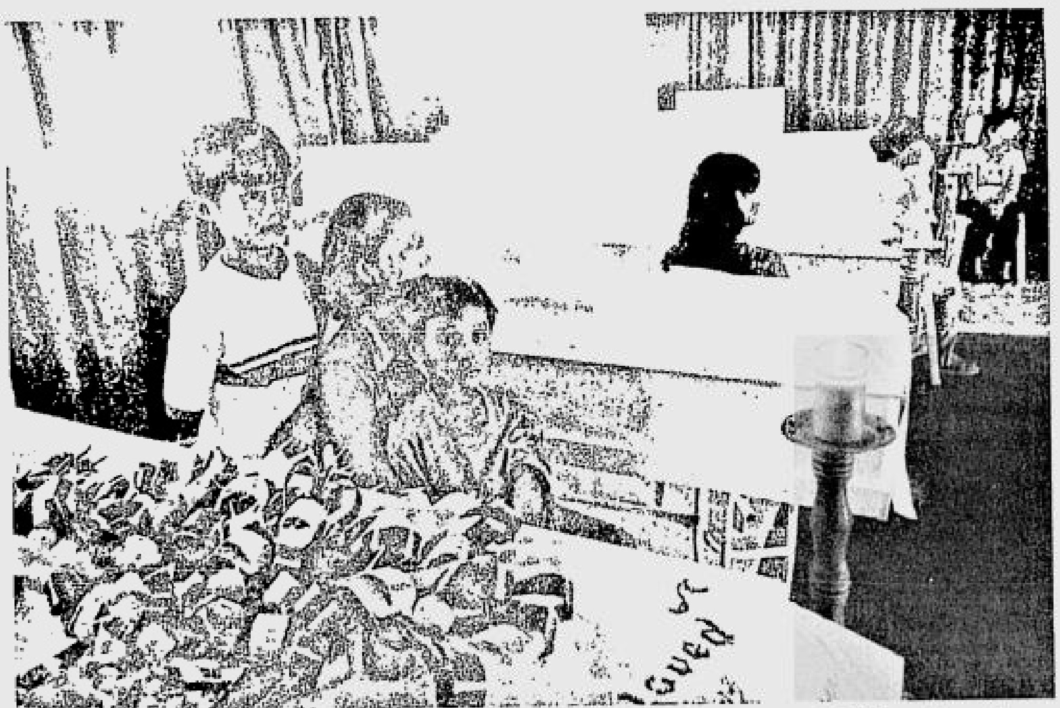
September was also relevant to the Muslim world as preparations were headway for the 10th session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Malaysia. A related event, the first International Conference of Muslim Young Leaders (ICMYL) was held at the Renaissance Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on Sept. 14-17, with almost 70 countries in attendance. The ICMYL endorsed then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad as the next secretary general of the OIC.

October saw the emotional farewell of Mahathir Mohammad as Prime Minister of Malaysia and turnover to Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Badawi as the 57 member country-OIC convened in Putrajaya, Malaysia on Oct. 16-18. Mohammad was to step down from being PM after serving for 40 years, becoming Asia's longest standing leader.

On October 11, academic luminary Cesar Majul, 79 and founding dean of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies passed away. He was followed in November by Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Candidato Gutoc, 56 (served as consul general and ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Bahrain) and Ambassador Mukhtar Muallam (Egypt).

On December 5, the 1st National Halal Conference, a showcase of accredited companies to Muslim food-processing was launched at the Hotel InterContinental in Manila. Muslim women convened for the Mindanao Women Peace Advocates Conference in Zamboanga City last Dec. 10-14, alongside the convention of ARMM's Cotabato City-based Regional Commission of Bangsamoro Women in Davao City.

Also in December, books were launched on the topic of terrorism on the local and regional front—Robert Aventajado's "140 Days of Terror" and CNN's Maria Ressa on "Seeds of Terror."



RELATIVES of the victims of the Koronadal bombing keep vigil beside the coffins of their loved ones in May 2003.

AP/PDI FILE

A doctor's bout with cancer

By Maria Cecil Laguardia
Koronadal City

HE HAS cancer of the skin. Melanoma is one of the deadliest types. Stage four. He has six months to live. By the time you read this, the countdown would have reached midway. His simple message to other cancer patients, "Don't quit." And live life to the full.

If you met him somewhere in town, you'd think he is in the pink of health. There were no traces of fear, bitterness or apprehension in him. He was never even in a hurry to squeeze the most out of his remaining months. This man surely knows courage at its deepest.

"If this is what my God has planned for me, so be it," is what he always says.

Apart from being a successful doctor on Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in the United States, Dr. Joseph Sueno is a man who can accept the worst part of life and deal with it like one ordinary problem. His eldest son Jay described him proudly as one who "knows how to work hard so he can play hard."

Plain Dodoy Sueno to almost everybody, he grew up in Koronadal City, South Cotabato. He studied in Koronadal Pilot Elementary School, and at the Notre Dame of Marbel for Boys in high school.

"From the very start, he was the dreamer among us," recalled his older brother, the former South Cotabato governor Ismael "Mike" Sueno. "He knows what he wants in life, and get it."

A few years after graduating from medicine at the University of Sto. Thomas (UST), he got married to Catalina "Nena" Almeda, a certified public accountant and daughter of the country's first inventor Benjamin Almeda. They migrated to the US in 1978. He went into residency training in 1980 in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

In between review notes and books for the board exams, he was househusband as he took care of son Jay, then a baby. By 1983, he has started his private practice in Olympia, Washington where he later established the First Rehabilitation and Sports Therapy Clinic. Nena said, "Our perseverance has paid off."

It took him three years to make his mark. Nena shared how her imagination of queuing patients, as soon as he opened his clinic, was dashed. Eventually, hard work paid off. Eighty percent of his practice is referral-based: his patients are referred to him by other doctors, most of whom Americans.

Asked why his brother is a success, Mike Sueno said "He is a focused man, and very generous." Every year, he makes it a point to go home to the Philippines and bring the Sueno clan together. The fourth in a family of seven, he was the one who "brings harmony to the family" especially when there were differences.

"Even when we were growing boys, he would always give me his own savings so I can buy what I want. He is selfless."

Dr. Joseph's only daughter Carolyn, whose dream of going to New York and work with MTV was realized because of his support, affirmed this, saying his generosity, support and spirit is beyond words.

"True friends though, know when you need help, they don't wait for you to ask for it—and that's my *Tatay* (father). Words cannot give justice to the greatness of my Tatay's friendship." Carolyn is on her way to a law school armed with her Tatay's inspiration.

When Dr. Sueno went to a dermatologist to consult a birthmark, he thought it was just a case of a fat tumor. "Even when I was studying, I had suspicions about my birthmark in the thigh." But he brushed this aside.

After a series of tests, the diagnosis came out—melanoma, a skin cancer that has spread to his liver and is already on stage four.

"I took the news as a doctor getting a diagnosis, not as a patient." He admitted he was on the period of denial.

Browsing through the web, MSN Health's Medical Encyclopedia described melanoma as "a form of skin cancer that occurs in the pigment-producing skin cells (melanocytes). These cells become abnormal, grow uncontrollably, and aggressively invade surrounding tissues. Melanoma may affect only the skin, or it may spread (metastasize) through the blood or lymph system to other organs and bones."

"Although melanoma is the least common type of skin cancer, the frequency of melanoma in the United States is increasing. It is the most serious form of skin cancer. Melanoma may be cured if caught and treated early, but it is rarely curable in its later stages." The last sentence seemed painful and raw in its finality.

The first thing he did was break the news to his family. There was so much anguish but for him something good came out of it.

"My family gave me more of their attention." He described it as his highest point as a person because before he felt he was always "on the giving end." His three children even stopped studying to give him time and care.

How will he live his few months? "I will be working as usual. Nothing would change except that now, we pray the holy rosary daily and try to go to Mass everyday."

The only thing left for him to do is share more of his blessings to others. Recently, he donated seed money to set up the Sueno Foundation aimed at providing scholarship to the poor children of the clan.

"Later, if it is big enough, we hope to extend it to others." That would be his last wish if given one, "to share more, a life of charity."

His coming home recently in Koronadal was for the family "a celebration of life." They gathered family, relatives and friends to celebrate his 54th birthday and a tribute was given in his honor. Among the most poignant testimonies about him was Jay's.

He told the hushed audience how his father instilled in him and his three siblings Paul, Carolyn and Michael, the three most important values: never cheat people, respect people no matter who they are and where they came from, and respect your elders. Sounds like our good old Filipino values that most have forgotten but this Filipino family in the States lived up to.

Not discounting the "wonderful home, the best education, opportunities and the values," Jay believes his best gift to his children is "his fatherly love." "When I was sick, he was there as a father first and physician second. If I had a sporting event, he would be there to cheer me on despite having to sit on the bench for sometimes 10 or more hours."

But the most important is that "Tatay tried to live up his life through Jesus" and possesses a kind of faith where he "finds his solace, strength and inspiration."

If the decision is left on him, he does not want to go into chemotherapy, not wanting himself to be bedridden just to prolong his life. By undergoing one regularly, doctors advised he may at least add two months to his life span.

He, however, bowed to his family's wishes and is currently undergoing dacarbacine, a chemotherapy that he describes as "four hours of pain."

Nena identified the values that make up the man with whom she spent countless "humble times" and successes—courage, honesty, compassion, humility, patience, perseverance, responsibility, respect and love. The list would have been endless. This man is a towering symbol that cancer is beaten with courage and faith in God.

As he walks through his last days, he is never afraid, and one can see that in his face. No fear, only peace and calm. Some people are truly blessed.

Miriam bolts FPJ camp

From page A1

was instead given by FPJ to Senator Legarda."

But the source said the KNP was attempting to "explain to her (Santiago) FPJ's decision to tap Loren as his running mate."

"Maybe, it will be FPJ who will do the talking," said the source.

Should Santiago leave the FPJ-Legarda ticket, the actor himself would fill up the vacancies. "It will probably be FPJ to make the choice. Anyway, he has enough time to make the replacement."

Tatad, too

In his telephone interview, Estrada said ex-Sen. Kit Tatad had also echoed Santiago's views about Legarda not being a genuine oppositionist, but he said Tatad has not yet indicated whether he will be pulling out of the senatorial race.

But Estrada gave assurances that in the face of these developments, he had asked his colleagues to respect Poe's choice of Legarda.

"I have asked them to give due respect to the decision of Ronnie. But they have very strong views against Loren, which I also have to respect," Estrada said.

Reached for comment, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. admitted that "things are not exactly well." But he said the developments were "manageable differences."

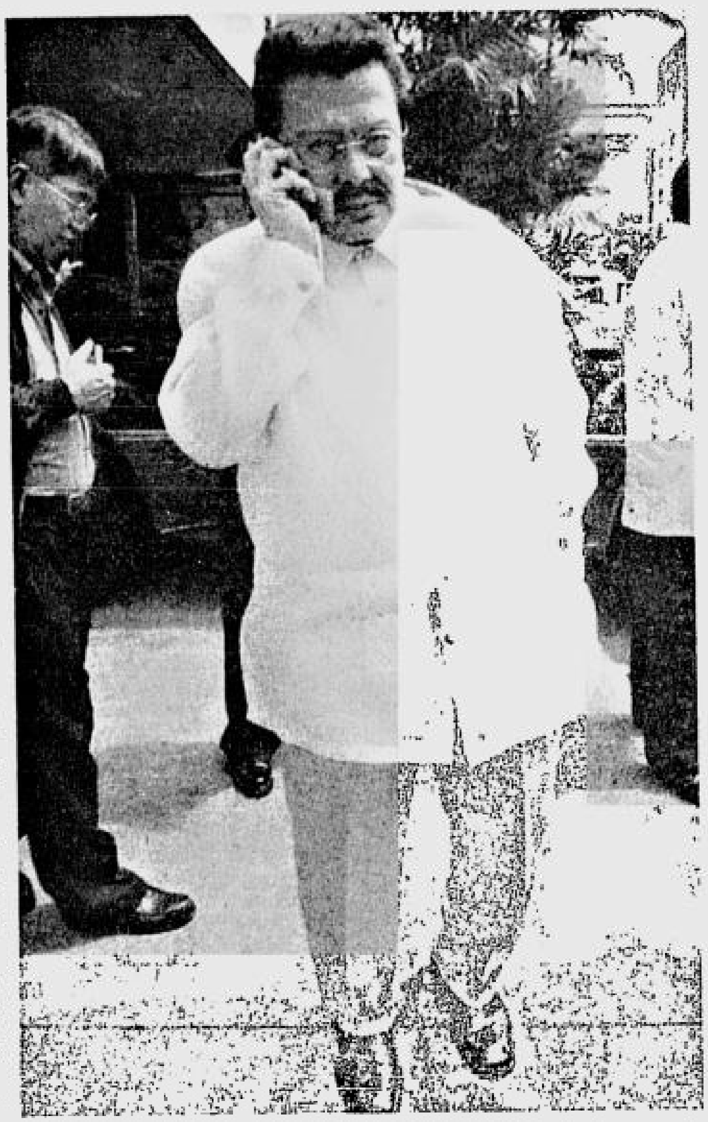
Pimentel also called on Legarda to "address that herself"—referring to the need to reach out to the pro-Estrada camp.

Close aide

Ramos, a close aide to Estrada, said Legarda may even suffer the fate of ex-Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado in the 2001 elections: be driven off the campaign stage by pro-Estrada supporters.

Mercado had withdrawn his support from Estrada together with the Armed Forces top brass in January 2001, but ran with the PMP ticket the following May.

The booing and hooting by Estrada diehards, Ramos recalled, forced Mercado to skip campaign rallies of the PMP.



ESTRADA: Miriam called me up from L.A. She said Legarda was not a genuine oppositionist but merely an opportunist. PDI FILE PHOTO

"He was lustily booed by loyalists of President Estrada. He ended up spending more time defending his stand (during Edsa II) than explaining his platform."

"Whenever Mercado went up to speak and (Sen. Loi Estrada) was around, he was shouted out of the stage. It is not a remote possibility that Legarda may suffer the same fate as Mercado," he said.

Ramos said Mercado, who is running under the administration party this time, eventually ended up not delivering his speeches during campaign rallies, or foregoing PMP rallies altogether.

"That is the reason why he lost the election," Ramos said, recalling that in Marinduque, Estrada loyalists did not allow Mercado to talk as they repeatedly shouted "*Erap pa rin* (We're still for Erap)!" and "*Alis diyan* (Get off the stage)!"

Herrera, too

Ramos said the same thing may happen to ex-Sen. Ernesto Herrera, who co-authored the impeachment complaint against Estrada in 2000.

Ramos said that this early, PMP campaign officials were already discussing ways to "cure" the situation that Legarda and Herrera may find themselves in.

"The ghost of Edsa II is haunting Loren and Boy Herrera," he said, adding that as the campaign heats up, the passion of the so-called Edsa Tres forces can only be expected to heighten.

Documentary

Ramos said passions may boil over when Estrada issues this month a documentary showing that there is no truth to the charges against him and that he was in jail now as a "victim of politics" and that Legarda and Herrera acted "not as participants but main engineers" in Estrada's fall. *(See related story on Page A3)*

"For what they did, Legarda and Herrera cannot easily be forgotten or forgiven by Estrada followers," he said.

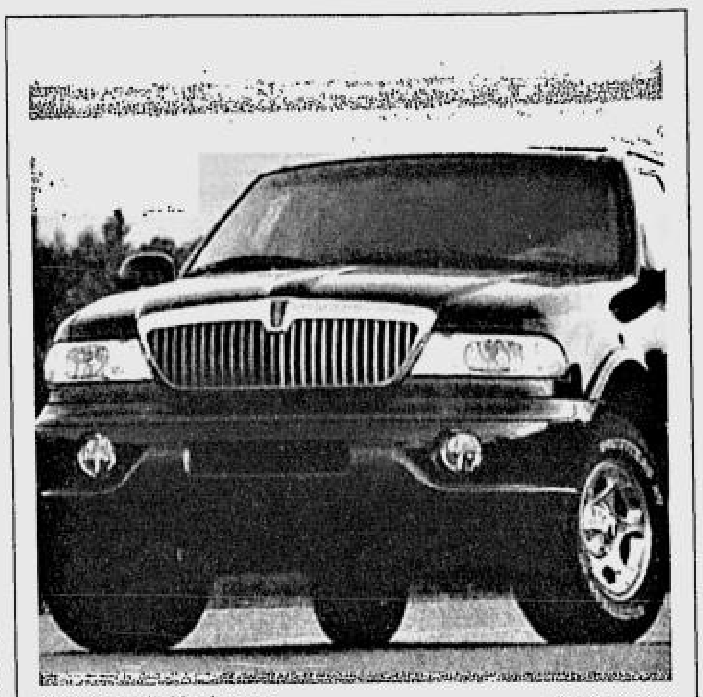
Meralco interests

Other than her Edsa II ties, Ramos said Legarda will also have to worry about her ties to the Lopez family, owners of the Manila Electric Co. which has been accused of earning unconscionably high profits through the controversial Purchase Power Adjustment (PPA).

Ramos noted that one of those who will campaign side by side with Legarda is former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who is expected to speak "harshly" against the PPA and the Lopezes.

"She is criticized for being a Lopez candidate for vice president and for having inked deals to support the power rate increase of the Lopezes should she win the elections," he said.

"She may get hurt by Enrile's tirades against the Lopezes," Ramos concluded. Legarda rose to prominence as host and news anchor of the ABS-CBN television network, which is also owned by the Lopez family. ***With a report from Volt Contreras***



1998 Lincoln Navigator INTERNET PHOTO

'Da King' is no car fancier

From page A1

237) whose latest model is priced at around P3 million.

A check with Ford's Makati branch showed that such a model is not sold by local dealers but has to be directly imported from manufacturers abroad. This jacks up the Navigator's price due to importation costs.

Former starlet Laarni Enriquez, mistress of Poe's close friend disgraced President Joseph Estrada, was said to be driving a Navigator.

Poe's second most expensive car in the list is perhaps the 1995 Ford Clubwagon, the 2003 model of which costs P1.85 million.

This 1995 model, according to Ford Makati, was not yet part of the company's local dealership that year, and had to be imported.

Other than the two expensive Fords, the rest of Poe's vehicles listed at the LTO are inexpensive considering the fortune the actor has made.

The actor has four vehicles released in the 1990s: a 1997 Toyota Camry (URJ-309); a 1990 Mitsubishi Fuso Fighter (WGT-265); a 1992 Mercedez Benz 300SE (TDW-820); and a 1993 Nissan (TGZ-770).

Poe also has a 1989 Nissan Patrol (PND-844), a 1989 Mitsubishi L-300 van (PNV-253), and a 1978 Chevrolet Lazer (NSE-758).

According to an LTO official, Poe's Ford Clubwagon and Navigator and the 1992 Benz were registered at the LTO's Diliman office, the Camry and Patrol at the LTO Camp Aguinaldo, Fuso Fighter at Pasay, 1993 Nissan at La Loma, 1972 Benz at Manila-North, L-300 at Manila-East, Lazer at Caloocan, and the Hi-Ace van at Mandaluyong.

The registrations of these vehicles, the official said, were renewed yearly at the LTO branch in San Juan.

Triple happiness for Wina, Willie, Wino despite poverty

From page A1

fore Christmas.

Asked why Christmas should be celebrated, the triplets said: "So that there will be love, peace and hope for all, especially the poor."

The triplets were born on May 22, 1995 one after the other, with only a minute separating their first cries. First came Willie, followed by Wina and then Wino.

INQUIRER readers first read about the triplets on Feb. 28, 1999 when the paper came out with their story, "Three's not a crowd." They were then five years old.

To the amazement of the more than 500 doctors who vied with each other for the privilege of delivering them, the triplets were not born conjoined. They were not identical, either.

Joker foots bill

The caesarian operation, which cost P120,000, was paid for by Sen. Joker Arroyo, then a congressman of Makati.

The triplets' parents, Wilfredo and Belinda Ibsernas, who expected the babies to be conjoined were greatly relieved.

"We prayed so hard that they would not be attached to each other like the ones we saw on television," said 44-year-old Wilfredo Ibsernas, speaking in Filipino.

Added Belinda, 33: "I was also apprehensive because I don't want them to live a difficult life. It's all right to be poor so long as they could be given a chance to lead separate, distinct lives."

So great was their relief that the couple, along with the entire squatter neighborhood near the Makati City Hall in F. Zobel Street, was jubilant.

Like rain in summer

"They were like drops of rain after a long summer," said Belinda, noting that the triplets were born in May.

She said the three children have been the family's inspiration and consolation.

WILLIE, Wina and Wino: Choice clear between table full of money or mama. "No one will love us more than our mother." JESS YUSON

The couple has no intention of having another child, at least not another set of triplets. They have an older daughter, Maria Concepcion, 14, who helps take care of the triplets.

The Ibsernas are a poor but hardworking couple.

Wilfredo was a longtime contractual employee at the flood control unit of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Makati. He was recently hired by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority as a utility employee.

To augment Wilfredo's P5,000 monthly salary, Belinda sells *goto, sopas, guinataan, samporado, lumpia, tokwa* and banana-cue from a sidewalk stall.

The family rents a modest dwelling for P1,500 a month.

Dream

Though she regards the triplets as a blessing, Belinda admits that the reality of raising them can be daunting.

"We're determined to send them to school until college. But we can only dream," she says.

Believing that an education would be the best legacy they can leave the triplets, she hopes that people would come forward to offer to finance their schooling.

Triple costs

She says the P150 that she earns daily is not even enough to provide for the three children's daily needs.

Each of the triplets spends P50 a day for food and tricycle fare to the Makati Elementary School. Both Willie and Wino are now in third grade while Wina is in Grade 1.

Willie alone spends about P1,000 for school projects throughout the year.

The couple also has to buy uniforms—short pants, socks, shoes, polo shirts—and school materials every school year; pay for tuition and other school fees; and pay other incidental expenses.

"Last year, we paid P165 for Wina's tuition and P170 for each of the boys. This year, we paid P300 each," said Belinda.

On top of that, Wille suffers from asthma, so he needs medication from time to time.

Gifts

For Christmas, Wino said he wanted a pair of shoes and toys; Wina, a Barbie doll, a dress and hair clips; and Wino, a pair of shoes and pants.

Belinda prays that she would be hired as a janitor street sweeper by city hall. She tried applying once but was rejected "maybe because I only finished Grade 6."

Although unaware that Christmas symbolizes the birth of Jesus, the triplets agreed that Christmas was necessary to make people happy.

"People will be sad, no one will give gifts and money anymore [if there is no Christmas]," said Wina.

Ma over money

Given a choice between a table full of money and their mother, they chorused: "*Nanay namin* [our mother]."

They said money could never replace their mother who takes care of them everyday.

"No one will love us more than our mother," said Wina.

"No one will take care of us," said Willie.

"We will starve," said Wino.

Not only are the three physically dissimilar, they also have different personalities.

"They detest wearing similar or identical clothes," said Belinda who described the eldest as playful, the second as reserved, and the youngest as talkative.

Wino would rather read books than play much like his elder brother Willie.

"Wina likes to fix things at home," said the mother.

Helping each other

But should one of them get in any kind of trouble, "expect the two to come to the other's aid."

All three can sing and dance to the currently popular "Otso-otso" and the "Spaghetti" song.

Before the triplets left the INQUIRER, they asked this writer if he could visit their house.

From their home in a depressed area beside the Pasig River, one can see the towering Makati skyline of the affluent other half of their city. Yet the triplets seem happy and contented.

SUERTRES 3 1 3

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METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

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And they're running…

QUEZON City's Sonny Belmonte and Herbert Bautista have made good their intention to run. JOAN BONDOC

By Leila Salaverria, Margaux Ortiz, Tina Santos and Tarra Quismundo

THEY'RE OFF.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte of Quezon City, Mayor Lito Atienza of Manila and their party mates yesterday made a beeline to the Commission on Elections offices in their respective cities to file their certificates of candidacy.

Belmonte, along with running mate Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, yesterday led members of the city's administration party to the local Comelec office to file their bids.

Belmonte, of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party, said that "progress in Quezon City will continue," if he gets to take the helm of the city a second time.

In red

Atienza, of the Lakas and Liberal parties, chose a former member of the opposition, Minority Floor Leader Don Bagatsing as his running mate.

Atienza and Bagatsing, both clad in red and accompanied by their wives, Evelina and Grace, yesterday took a five-minute walk to the Comelec office in Manila, where they filed their bids at around 10:30 a.m.

Also throwing their hats in the ring were the Liberal Party's 36 bets for the city's council seats in six districts.

Atienza is on his second term as Manila mayor, while Bagatsing is on his second term as councilor.

The Liberal Party also named its congressional slate yesterday. Among the candidates were Atienza's son Kim, and son-in-law, Miles Roces.

Opposition

Atienza and Bagatsing will be up against Mel Lopez and incumbent Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna, according to Harry Angping, Manila's 3rd District representative.

Lopez was mayor of Manila from 1988 to 1992. Lacuna, who was Lopez's vice mayor, is seeking his last term this year.

The two have yet to file their bids.

In Makati, city councilor Oscar Ibay yesterday made formal his bid to unseat incumbent Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Ibay, of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party, named fellow councilor Elena Macay as his vice mayor.

Running for the people

Ibay said the "people of Makati are already tired" of Binay's leadership and promised to undo Binay's "failures."

"I'm running for the people," Ibay told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "Mayor Binay seemed to have drowned himself in power and forgotten about them."

When asked to comment, Binay shrugged off Ibay's challenge.

The Makati mayor, who filed his bid last Wednesday, said that he is "confident" that the programs he has implemented in Makati "will see (him) through."

In northern Metro Manila, former mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr. is bent on reclaiming Caloocan City, where his clan held sway for some decades.

Incumbent Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo unseated the Asistios nine years ago.

Asistio yesterday filed his certificate of candidacy at the local Comelec office.

Asistio will be up against Rep. Enrico Echiverri, Rep. Edgar Erice and the mayor's wife, Gigi Malonzo.

MANILA'S Lito Atienza and Don Bagatsing show off their certificates of candidacy at the city's Comelec office in Arroceros. JM GUIAO PUNZALAN

In QC, cracks start to show in armor of Lakas-CMD

By Nelson Flores

THE OPPOSITION is not the only bloc that appears to be losing its solidarity as the May elections draw near.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, chair of the administration Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD), last week declared that he would not be supporting his party's bets for the city's congressional seats.

Belmonte told the INQUIRER that he would not be supporting the congressional candidates of Lakas and would only back the party's slate for the city council.

He explained that although he is the local chair of Lakas, he has no power to appoint candidates for the various congressional seats and other national positions.

"They are running for a position in Congress and Belmonte is supposed to support them? That is crazy!" Belmonte exclaimed. "I will not extend any logistical or financial support to their candidacy."

Belmonte said that when he gunned for the congressional seat, he did not receive a single centavo or any form of support from the then city mayor, even if they were from the same party.

According to a source close to Belmonte and the activities of the city council, Malacañang is pressuring the mayor to anoint Bernadette Romulo-Puyat as the administration's congressional bet for the city's first district.

Puyat, 34, daughter of President Macapagal-Arroyo's executive secretary Alberto Romulo, was a teacher of economics and an entrepreneur before she decided to embark on a political career, despite her lack of political experience.

But Belmonte denied that Malacañang was pressuring him to support the congressional bid of Puyat.

He also said that Puyat had earlier asked him to induct her as a party member, which he did.

Puyat also denied that Malacañang, particularly her father, was pressuring Belmonte.

She said that her father has a high regard of the mayor.

"They (Malacañang officials) won't do such a thing (pressure Belmonte)," Puyat said.

Puyat confirmed that it was Belmonte who arranged her induction at City Hall.

She also denied that it was her father who prodded her to run.

Atienza still bent on taking back Manila's jewels

IF MANILA Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. makes it in May, he vows to take back Manila's "lost jewels."

Atienza, who is running for his third term as city mayor in the May elections, said that this election year, he and the entire slate of the Liberal Party, will be addressing the "very crucial issue" of reclaiming the city's former property, which are now administered by national government agencies.

Manila 2nd District Councilor and Majority Floor Leader Marlon Lacson said that these include the 48-hectare Rizal Park and the whole of Intramuros, in Ermita, which are supervised by the Intramuros Administration; the Rizal Memorial Stadium, now under the Philippine Sports Commission; and port operations at Manila's North and South Harbors that are overseen by the Philippine Ports Authority.

Lacson said that the administration of Rizal Park, Intramuros, the Rizal Memorial Stadium and the ports—all within Manila's city limits—were taken from the city through presidential decrees enacted during the time of deposed President Ferdinand Marcos.

When asked how he would recoup the jewels, Atienza said that the answer lies in legislation.

"We need to elect better congressmen because there is a need to either repeal or amend the law that took away the jewels," said Atienza. *Tarra Quismundo*

METROBRIEFS

Hunt on for Army man

SGT. GERONIMO Anquillano of the Armed Forces of the Philippines gunned down a civilian employee of the AFP headquarters in Quezon City last week, according to a police report released yesterday. Police said Roldan Segarino, 35, of Malanday, Marikina, was on his motorcycle bound for the AFP Headquarters Support office when the suspect shot the victim at 11:45 p.m. Segarino died of his wounds on Friday at the AFP Medical Center on V. Luna Road. The police are now looking for Anquillano, 43, a resident of Soldier's Village, Sta. Lucia, Pasig City. *Tina Santos*

Fetus found in church

A HUMAN fetus early yesterday morning was discovered at the doorstep of the St. Joseph Convent in Quezon City. Police estimated the fetus to be about 2 months old. At around 4 a.m., convent worker Jose Lucero found the fetus inside a brown paper bag that was left at the main door of the church located at the corner of Hemady and 11th Streets, New Manila *Tina Santos*

Suspected robbers nailed

POLICE yesterday arrested Gerardo Manalastas, 43, for ransacking the house of his former employer in Quezon City during the holidays. The lawmen also arrested tricycle driver Walter Arano, 30, for helping Manalastas rob the house of Alfredo Magno. Police said Arano used his tricycle to haul Magno's appliances amounting to about P150,000 last Dec. 30. Police said Magno was away on vacation when the suspects hit his house in Doña Faustina Subdivision, Novaliches, Quezon City. *Tina Santos*

Burglar hits PDI reporter's house

A REPORTER of the Philippine Daily Inquirer on Friday night lost her laptop and P3,000 worth of coins when a burglar ransacked her apartment in Cainta, Rizal.

Dona Pazzibugan's husband, Philippine Star reporter Delon Porcalla, also lost his laptop to the burglar. Both laptops were worth about P139,000, Pazzibugan said.

Pazzibugan said they discovered the burglary around midnight upon returning home from work.

She said that they were not the only victims at their apartment building on Sardonyx Street in Cainta Greenpark.

Pazzibugan said two apartment units on the floor above them were also hit by the burglar.

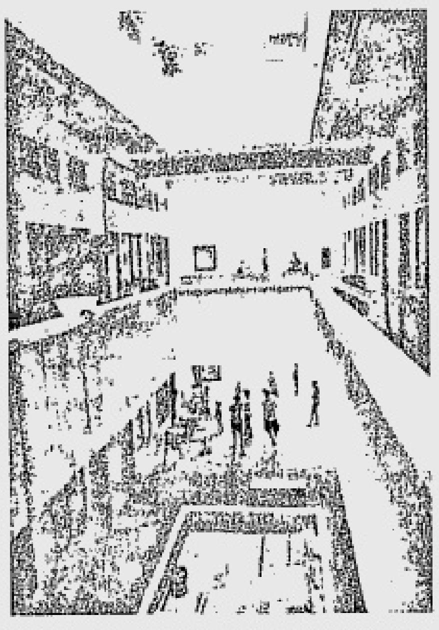
The thief opened two balikbayan boxes and stole jewelry from their neighbors, Pazzibugan said.

The reporter added that the burglar placed all his loot in Porcalla's overnight bag.

"The thief was able to enter our units by destroying the knobs of our front doors," Pazzibugan said. *Margaux Ortiz*

THE SMOKEY Mountain Development Reclamation Project

PHOTOS BY ERIK ARAZAS



MOST of the families at the housing project are first-time homeowners.

New year, new house for homeless family

By Tarra Quismundo

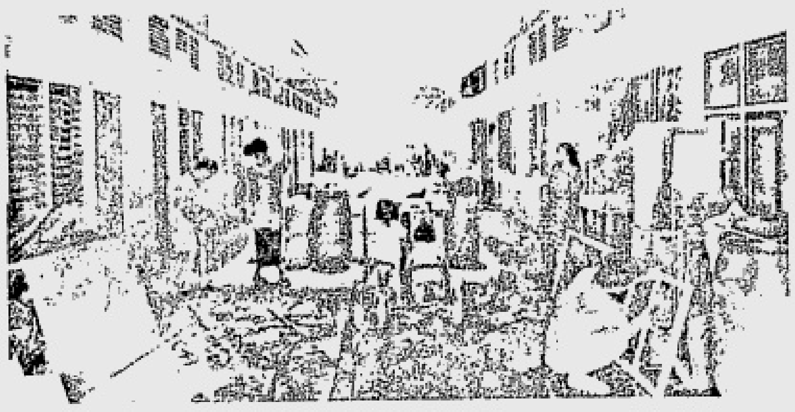
FOR THE first time in 29 years, Nenita Santiago, 42, celebrated the holidays in her own home.

"Noche Buena was the same, not that much," Santiago said in Filipino. "We had the typical food and sweets that we have every year. The only difference was that we were already in our own home."

Santiago had been living with her parents and siblings in the garbage dump that came to be known as Smokey Mountain since 1974.

Now, Santiago, her husband and five children, live in a 20-square meter housing unit on the second floor of Building 15 in a portion of Tondo, Manila, known as Barrio Magdaragat. The lot used to be the site of a pile of trash as high as an 11-story building. Santiago's family is one of the 762 families who moved into their new homes last Dec. 9 through a low-cost housing project that had been built under the Smokey Mountain Development and Rehabilitation Project (SMDRP).

"This has been our dream for so long. We wanted to own a house for so long, and we could not believe that our dreams have come true," said Santiago in Filipino.



NOTHING beats owning a house of your own, according to one of the 762 families who each received a housing unit in Manila during the holidays.

The families, some of whom jumped for joy when they heard news of their transfer, according to Santiago, are slowly settling into their new homes, which each has a 12-square meter mezzanine area that serves as sleeping quarters.

No matter how small the units might be, the families have put their touches into them.

Linoleum now covers some of the floors. The others have painted the walls and have started hanging family pictures.

"I can not understand how I am feeling. Though the house is crowded, it feels so good and peaceful to sleep (here) at night," William Morallos, who shares a unit with his wife and six children, said in Filipino.

A former scavenger, Morallos has been living in Smokey Mountain since 1987. He said that since they stayed in this mountain of garbage, he had not been able to close his eyes at night for fear that trash would crash into his makeshift home and burry him and his family alive.

The rest of the 2,761 families, long time Smokey Mountain residents who would occupy the other low-cost buildings will move into their houses in March.

The SMDRP of the National Housing Authority had its beginnings in January 1992, when then President Corazon Aquino approved an NHA conceptual plan to turn the 21-hectare Smokey Mountain area into a portside community.

At that time, the dumpsite was occupied by about 3,500 families, who settled around the pile of trash, and even on top of the mountain of garbage, the gaseous emission of which earned for itself the name "Smokey Mountain."

Families will pay a subsidized and discounted amount, ranging from P50,000 to P142,000, for their houses, depending on which floor the unit is located.

The payment is spread over a 16 to 25 year period, based on the length of time a resident has been living in Barrio Magdaragat. For Morallos, the monthly due is P1,270 for the next 16 years. Not a bad price for a home of his own.

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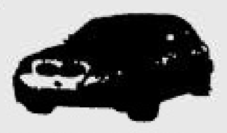

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA-Magic vs Grizzlies; 9 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Orlando hopes that it doesn't sing the blues when it travels to Memphis.

NBA Greatest Games-1981 NBA All-Star Game; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Take a trip down memory lane and see the best players of the '80s gather in the mid-season classic.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

MAIN CANDIDATE

Puerto Rican to train Pacquiao?

PACQUIAO: Filipino ring idol

VAL HANDUMON

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

A PUERTO Rican based in New York is the leading candidate as new trainer of IBF superbantam king Manny Pacquiao following the decision of American Freddie Roach to sever ties with the Filipino champ.

New York-based Lenny de Jesus is said to be the main candidate to take over from Roach, the INQUIRER learned yesterday from a reliable source.

Roach, who took care of whipping up Pacquiao into shape in his last four fights in the US, resigned early in the week, saying he's not happy with the way the Filipino's career is being managed and that some members of Team Pacquiao have cheated him of his 10-percent trainer's fee.

"What they have said to me is that I am the first one on that list, although they are also considering Buddy McGirt," De Jesus said yesterday in an interview with Jorge Perez of El Nuevo Dia publication in his residence in New York.

De Jesus, however, intimated that if McGirt lands the job, he'd be happy as well. "I won't have any problem with McGirt, he is also from New York and is my friend," he said.

De Jesus has been a fixture in the Pacquiao camp in the United States, oftentimes working as assistant to Roach especially in the Filipino's buildup against world featherweight great Marco Antonio Barrera, whom Pacquiao demolished in the 11th round last November in San Antonio, Texas.

Pacquiao is slated to grace the Jan. 9 annual awards night of the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) at the Manila Pavilion where no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo heads the impressive guest list.

The Filipino ring idol is currently in Manila shooting television commercials, and will fly to the US with business manager Rod Nazario soon to finalize details of his next fight.

Meanwhile, a virtual Clash of the Terminators will be held on Jan. 18 in Cebu when ALA Boy Rocky Fuentes takes on Roger Gadian at the Gaisano Countrymall.

The fight serves as part of the Sinulog celebrations.

Phone Pals keep Fran for P7.2M

By June Navarro

FRAN

SWINGMAN Patrick Fran was assured of a long-term contract extension by Talk 'N Text officials right after the Phone Pals' breakthrough victory in the season-opening All Filipino Cup last year.

The Phone Pals fulfilled their promise yesterday, signing up Fran to a fresh three-year pact that will guarantee the former University of Santo Tomas standout at least P7.2 million in salaries outside of perks and bonuses.

The 5-foot-10 Fran blended perfectly with Asi Taulava, Jimmy Alapag, Vic Pablo and Bong Ravena as the Phone Pals turned back the Coca-Cola Tigers after trailing 0-2 in their best-of-seven AFC Finals showdown.

Although Fran could still be traded to Red Bull Barako in the wake of the Willie Miller deal, the six-year PBA veteran is already assured of receiving roughly P200,000 a month beginning this season until 2006.

Except for Taulava and Alapag, the Barakos have been given the right to get two players of their choice, possibly an off-guard and a forward, from the Phone Pals after trading Miller to the Manny Pangilinan-owned ballclub.

The Phone Pals had also obtained the 6-foot-9 Yancy de Ocampo from the FedEx Express in exchange for their first-round pick (ninth overall) in the Annual Rookie Draft set Jan. 16 at the Glorietta Activity Center.

Fran was the first Phone Pal to be rehired by his mother team. Still without contracts are Angelo David, Norman Gonzales, Felix Belano, Christian Nicdao, Jojo Manalo and Noli Locsin.

In another development, Coca-Cola officials have initiated a couple of player trades to boost their bid for a higher first-round pick in the coming Draft.

Sources said the Tigers, who will be selecting 10th and last in the first-round, want Red Bull's Mick Pennisi and Davonn Harp and are willing to exchange any of the Tigers for them except Rudy Hatfield.

Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes said the Tigers would have grabbed De Ocampo, the league's top pick in 2002, had the Express offered a trade favorable to both parties.

RP Int'l jungolf meet gets under way Jan. 6

THE COUNTRY'S top players will pit their skills against their counterparts from other countries when the 7th Samsung Philippine International Junior Golf Championship reels off Jan. 6 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club east course.

Veteran internationalists Jenz Tecson, Paolo and Frederick Garcia, the Superals and Nicole Serapio head the Philippine challenge.

Taiwan, with seven players, is officially represented by the Golf Association of the Republic of China (Garoc), while 10 players from Hong Kong represent the Hong Kong Golf Association.

Players from SportExcel of Malaysia, Thailand Junior Golf Club, Sarawak, Singapore, Australia and the United States are also participating in this annual event that has become extremely popular among junior players in the region.

The traditional opening ceremony will be held at 4 p.m. Monday at Wack Wack with veteran golf columnist and rules authority Taby Tabaniag as the guest speaker. Noted sports broadcaster Ed Picson is emcee.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo has been invited for the third straight time to hit the ceremonial drive.

Three years ago, President Macapagal-Arroyo, then the Vice President, did the same honor.

"Once again, we have a strong field as well as an array of generous sponsors in the region's biggest tournament," said organizer Edgardo "Tito Boy" Cantada yesterday. "We welcome all the participants as we also express our gratitude to our supporters, most especially title sponsor Samsung Electronics."

Other sponsors are Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Cebu Pacific, San Miguel Corp., Nike Pacsports, PLDT, Toyota Otis, Morelia Tours, Philippine Flour Mill, Gatorade, Cowhead Milk, Airlift Asia, Holiday Inn Galeria Suites, sportsmen Takanobu Taira, Gilberto Duavit, Raul Jorge, Hermie Esguerra and Triplex Tents.

Highlights of the event will be featured in a four-part television special on four consecutive Sundays in "Golf Power" at 3 p.m.

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Polyphonic Tones

Title	Artist	Keywords
Thoia Thoing	*R. Kelly*	**MTONE THOIA**
Mr. Suave	*Parokya Ni Edgar*	**MTONE MRSUAVE**
Spaghetti Song	*Sexbomb*	**MTONE SPAG**
Where is the Love	*Black Eyed Peas*	**MTONE WERISLUV**
Somewhere I Belong	*Linkin Park*	**MTONE SOMEWHERE**
Ms. Independent	*Kelly Clarkson*	**MTONE MSIN**
Shake ya Tailfeather	*Nelly and P. Diddy*	**MTONE TAILF**
Harder To Breathe	*Maroon 5*	**MTONE HARDER**
Rock With Ya	*Ashanti*	**MTONE ROCKWIT**
The Whole Of The Moon	*Mandy Moore*	**MTONE WHOLEMOON**
Why Not	*Hilary Duff*	**MTONE WHYNOT**
White Flag	*Dido*	**MTONE WHITF**
Make A Wish	*Vic Zhou*	**MTONE MAKEWISH**
Hey Whatever	*Westlife*	**MTONE HEYWHAT**
I'll Be	*Edwin McCain*	**MTONE IBE**
Asereje	*Las Ketchup*	**MTONE ASEREJE**
Numb	*Linkin Park*	**MTONE NUMB**
If You're Not The One	*Daniel Bedingfield*	**MTONE IFYOURNOT**
Behind Blue Eyes	*Limp Bizkit*	**MTONE BEHINDB**
Feeling This	*Blink 182*	**MTONE FEELINGT**

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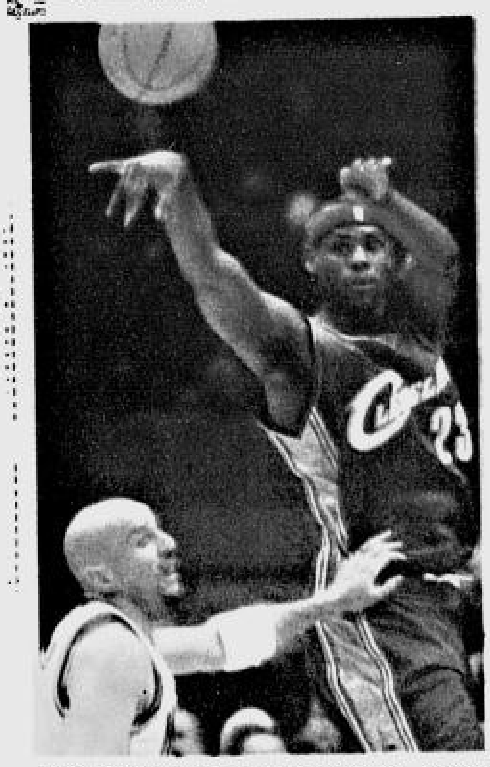
Kidd shuts down LeBron, Cavs


JAMES (right) rifles a pass over Kidd. REUTERS

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Jason Kidd showed LeBron James how it's done on both ends of the court, and threw in a lesson in playground basketball.

Kidd had 26 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds and played a major part in limiting James to 14 points in the New Jersey Nets' 97-82 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Friday night.

The highlight of the show came when Kidd faked a behind-the-back pass on a third-quarter fastbreak and pulled the ball back for a layup.

"It was one of the best plays of the year, by far," James said after his worst game in almost a month. "It will be on the Top 10."

James performance was among his worst 10.

"I wasn't as aggressive as I have been in the last 12 games," said James, who had four points and three assists in the second half. "It was very cold out there, but that's no excuse. I should have been more aggressive and I should have attacked more."

His point total was his lowest since scoring eight against Atlanta on Dec. 6. The top pick in the NBA draft had scored at least 17 points in his previous 12 games and had averaged 27.3 since Dec. 11. But James couldn't make anything happen with Kidd, Richard Jefferson and Kerry Kittles challenging him every time he touched the ball.

James threw up two airballs, missed two free throws, had two shots blocked—the first by Kidd—and struggled with his shot, going 6-of-19. He also had nine assists and four rebounds.

While cheered when introduced, the crowd started booing James every time he touched the ball and shouted "Airball" when he failed to hit anything.

James impressed Kidd, though.

"The special thing is he doesn't have to beat you by scoring," Kidd said after the Nets won for the 11th time in 14 games. "He is 6-foot-8, 240, and to be 19-years old and have the composure he has—He is special."

Jefferson and Kittles added 20 points apiece and Kenyon Martin dominated inside, collecting 16 points, 13 rebounds, three blocks and five steals.

Carlos Boozer had his sixth straight double-double for the Cavaliers with 16 points and 13 assists.

New Jersey shot 24-of-39 in the second half, with Kidd going 7-of-8 while scoring 17 points.

After being down by four at the half, the Nets took the lead in the third quarter and broke the game open in the fourth after Kevin Ollie hit a three-point play to get the Cavaliers within 74-72.

Martin ignited a 12-0 run with a three-point play and Kidd, who was 9-of-18 from the field, hit consecutive jumpers in transition to push the lead to 81-72. *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Andrada tennis tilt

NICOLE Magaway turned back Kyle Cordero, 1-6, 6-2, 6-2, and Gerardo Narvaez whipped Raymond Padigos, 4-6, 6-1, 6-0, yesterday to enter the boys' 14-under second round of the 15th Andrada Cup Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Ernesto Pantua III also advanced after posting a 6-0, 4-6, 6-1 victory over Rodell Navarro while Vincent Atienza trounced Andrew Ivan Orilla, 6-2, 6-1. In other matches, No. 2 Joshua Tan Ho downed Noel Fernandez, 6-0, 6-1; No. 3 El Santo Santos won by default over Marlo Espedido; No. 4 Patrick Arevalo ripped Joman Narvaez, 6-2, 6-0; No. 5 Jose Opulencia blasted Allaine Pila, 6-0, 6-0; No. 6 Julius Lagman clipped Juan Fidel Regis, 6-4, 6-0; No. 8 Juan Carlo Pantua routed Karl Cruz, 6-0, 6-0 and Akio Hari Ong Sy clobbered Ivan Bolanos, 6-0, 6-0. In the boys' 18-under division, Raymond Villarete thumped Chung Soo Han, 7-5, 6-2; Nestor Celestino Jr. routed Neil Fernandez, 6-2, 6-0; Johnwill Baldonado downed Angelo Patrimonio, 6-1, 6-4; Rommel Openiano beat Julian Lagman, 6-3, 6-2; and Miguel Narvaez blanked Raja Sogi, 6-0, 6-0, to gain second-round berths.

Photo exhibit set

VETERAN photojournalist Ramon C. Vecina will launch the country's first coffee table book on photojournalism entitled "Ramon Vecina: Fifty Years of Photojournalism" at the Philippine Sportswriters Awards Night at Manila Pavilion Hotel on Friday, Jan. 9. A biography in pictures, it encompasses five decades of photojournalism in topics such as sports through the years, news, human interest, tourism, politics, progress, poverty, turbulent rallies, disasters and calamities including Edsa I and II. Vecina has covered eight presidents: Ramon Magsaysay, Carlos P. Garcia, Diosdado Macapagal, Ferdinand Marcos, Cory Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He also hobnobbed with world celebrities like American actors John Wayne, Charleston Heston, President Dwight Eisenhower, Gen. Douglas McArthur, boxer Muhammad Ali, the Jackson Five and Michael Jackson. Vecina appeals for support from corporate friends, foundations and NGO's as the book will be donated to public and private libraries through the Department of Education on the second printing. Call 714-8546 for details.

Servia wins 2nd stage

NARBONNE, France—Spain's Jose-Maria Servia won the mud-clogged second stage of the Dakar rally on Friday, with the race cut short after Frenchman Claude Arnoux got stuck. Servia, driving a Schlesser-Ford buggy, completed the tricky 25-kilometer (15.6-mile) stage around the southern city of Narbonne in 25 minutes, three seconds ahead of France's Stephane Peterhansel in a Mitsubishi. *AP*

SuperSonics edge Lakers

Payton cheered but Allen gets loudest roar

SEATTLE—The Seattle crowd cheered all night for Gary Payton and roared loudest at the end for Ray Allen.

Complete results:
Washington 97, Golden State 79; New Orleans 86, Toronto 74; Indiana 103, Boston 90; Chicago 104, New York 99; New Jersey 97, Cleveland 82; Miami 112, Orlando 101; Detroit 93, Phoenix 81; Minnesota 93, Atlanta 75; Memphis 100, Utah 88; Milwaukee 109, Dallas 101; Denver 106, Portland 96; Seattle 111, LA Lakers 109.

Allen scored 35 points and hit a layup with 5.8 seconds to play, lifting the SuperSonics to a 111-109 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday night in Payton's first game in Seattle since being traded away last February after 12 1/2 seasons.

Kobe Bryant scored 18 of his 32 points in the fourth period, but he missed a 3-pointer that would have won it at the buzzer. Fans and Sonics players broke into pandemonium when Rashard Lewis collected the rebound.

Payton scored 24 points with five assists and five rebounds, but it couldn't prevent the Sonics from their third straight win over the Lakers.

Los Angeles didn't have Karl Malone, who hasn't played since Dec. 21 because of a sprained knee ligament, and lost Shaquille O'Neal early in the second quarter when a strained right calf flared up.

O'Neal, averaging 20.6 points and 11.8 rebounds, played only 14 minutes, scoring six points with five rebounds.

Payton was shipped to Milwaukee in the blockbuster deal that brought Ray Allen to Seattle.

"The Glove," who joined the Lakers as a free agent last summer, remains Seattle's franchise leader in scoring, assists, steals, games played, minutes and several other statistical categories.

Payton was the first player introduced and received a standing ovation of just over a minute. Sonics chair Howard Schultz, who feuded with Payton last season, stood to applaud from his courtside seat.

Fans posted signs that read, "G.P.: Greatest Sonic of all time," "Welcome Home Gary" and "We'll Always Love the Glove."

It was a thrilling finish. Seattle led 106-102 after two foul shots by Lewis and a bank shot by Allen, but Bryant hit a 3-pointer and Payton made one of two free throws to tie it with 1:11 to go.

Allen swished a 3-pointer from the left side with 36.4 to play, then had Bryant smothered in the left corner at the other end.

But Bryant calmly hit a 3-pointer of his own, sending a groan through the sold-out arena when his shot fell as he backed into the Sonics bench. That tied it at 109 with 22.8 seconds remaining.

After a Seattle timeout, Allen brought the ball downcourt, worked 10 seconds off the clock, swung around Bryant's defense and drove for a layup that went in with 5.8 seconds on the clock.

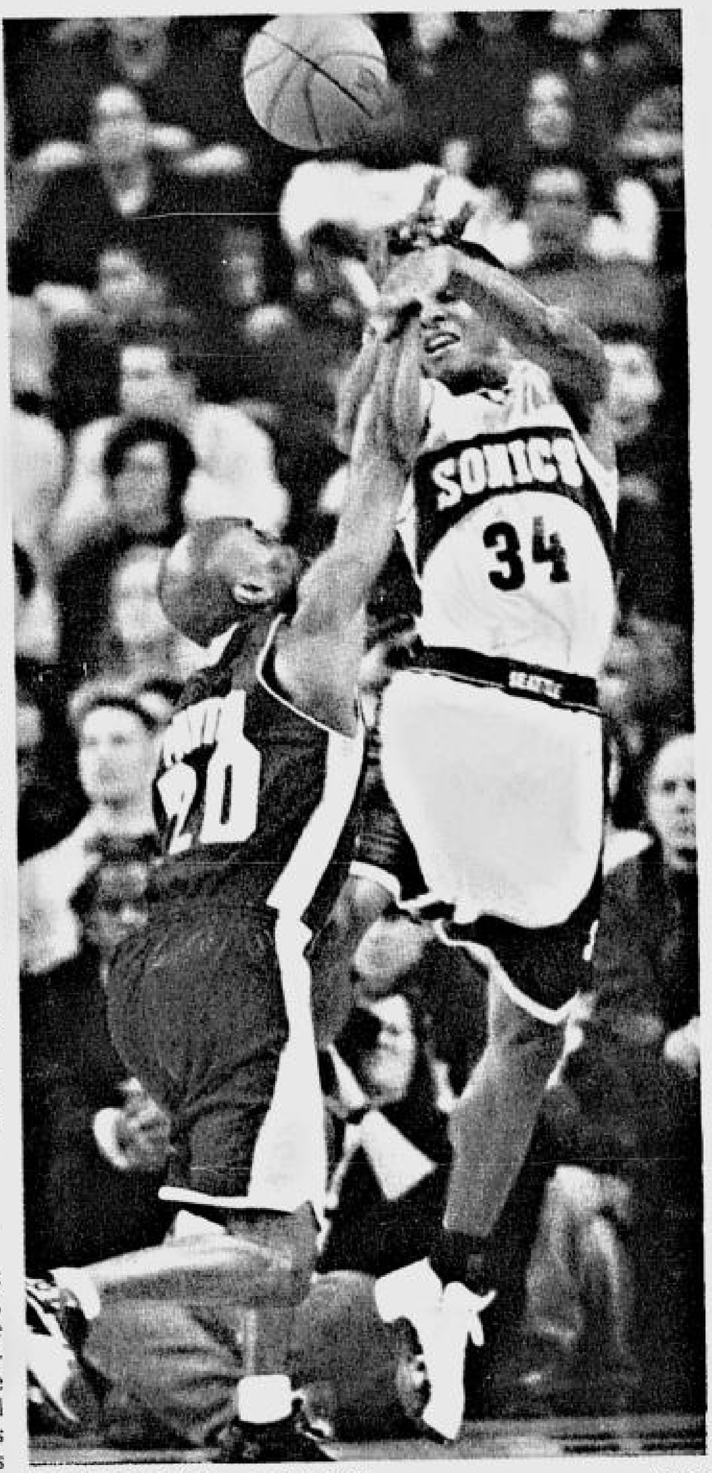
Meanwhile, Karl Malone was not with the Los Angeles Lakers for their game Friday night against Seattle, but the team didn't place him on the injured list as had been expected.

Malone, the NBA's second-leading career scorer behind Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, sprained the medial collateral ligament in his right knee Dec. 21 in the first quarter of a game against Phoenix and hasn't played since.

He is considered day-to-day, though the injury hasn't healed fast enough to help team officials determine when Malone might be ready.

In Toronto, the Raptors traded Chinese center Mengke Bateer to the Orlando Magic for Scottish forward Robert Archibald on Friday.

The Raptors also sent Orlando the rights to 2003 second-round draft choice Remon Van de Hare. *AP*



PAYTON (left) foils a shot by Allen . REUTERS

Titans aim to snap losing skid

BALTIMORE—When Eddie George looks back on an outstanding NFL career, he won't have too many fond memories of running past Ray Lewis into the end zone. When it comes to Ray versus Eddie, the advantage has gone clearly to the Baltimore Ravens' standout middle linebacker. The Tennessee Titans (12-4) will seek to snap a five-game losing streak against Baltimore (10-6) in a first-round AFC playoff game Saturday. The biggest roadblock in the Titans' path to the Super Bowl is Lewis, the NFL Defensive Player of the Year and one of the fiercest competitors in the game. During their five-game run against Tennessee, the Ravens limited George to one touchdown and an average of 55.4 yards rushing per game. As much as it pains him to say so, George admits that Lewis had pretty much had his way. *AP*

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1 Terminator 2. Ghurka 3. Princess Naida 4. Magiliw
Race 2—1. Sexy Royal 2. Lady Victoria 3. Wynona Raider 4. Bullish Dream 5. Beat D Heat
Race 3—1. Tervalac 2. Alessandra 3. Captain Stone
Race 4—1. Habagat 2. Master Kenneth 3. Feast of Diamond 4. Risen Free 5. Roulette Queen 6. Very Sharp
Race 5—1 Count Your Blessing s 2. Uncle Buck 3. Native Prince 4. Amman 5. ·kip Away
Race 6—1. Mystika 2 Charming Belle 3. Fantasia 4. Shotgun Banjo 5. Caesar's Inn
Race 7—1. Manila Slew/Binibini 2. Western Dancer 3. Party Goer 4. Jazz in Time 5. Fountain of Gold
race 8—1. Buena Sera 2. Free Wind 3. Real Slew 4. Catwalk Pia/Enchanted Mist
race 9—1. Queen Matawe 2. Boss Abt 3. Security Star 4. Air Force One 5. Speed Battle 6. Top Most
Race 10—1. Alert One 2. Cable Car 3. Hong Kong Treasures 4. Break Away
Race 11—1. Impromptu 2. Perfect Gift 3. Dulce My Love 4. Husay Na 5. Flying Free
Race 12—1. Speed Machine 2. Puppy Dog Tail 3. Conquer D Sun
Race 13—1. Music is Love 2. Wings of Magic 3. Mika's Pride 4. Reign of Fire 5. Nagmamahal 6 Freedom Bell
Race 14—1. Speed O War 2 Cutting Edge 3. Successful Dream 4. Striker
Race 15—1. Sir Lawrence 2 Spirited Lady 3. Dahdah 4 Fancy Free 5. Big Mania

Dear God: Why?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

TO: God

Address: Somewhere in the Universe

Dear God:

I know how busy you must be with a whole universe to worry about. That's why it occurred to me that you don't have time to read our papers and your TV reception might not be good. So I thought I'd drop you a note about how things are going here.

Well, things couldn't be going any better, at least as far as your image is concerned. You wouldn't believe how well loved you are in this planet today, and how much is being done in your name.

I hardly know where to start, there's so much going on. So I might as well start in Northern Ireland, where you've always been very big. Ah, what religious fervor can be found there.

The Irish Protestants are so devoted to you that they do everything possible to make life miserable for the Irish Catholics, because they don't think the Irish Catholics have the right approach toward worshipping you.

And the Irish Catholics do what they can to make life miserable for the Irish Protestants for essentially the same reasons.

In their great love for you, they shoot at one another, bomb one another, set one another afire, kill little children, bystanders, cops, soldiers, old ladies, and some are now committing suicide by starvation.

Then each side buries its dead, goes to church, and gives fervent thanks to you for being on its side. It is very touching.

And one thing about these people: Their devotion to you is unshakable. They've been doing this for about four hundred years. So it's a good thing that you have an entire universe at your disposal, because I don't know where else could you find room to accommodate the souls of all the people who have died there in your name.

You're also highly regarded in a country called Lebanon, where just about everyone believes in you, although they don't agree on what you should be called.

In that country, there are Moslems and Christians, and they have created different sets of rules for worshipping you. Naturally, they say you have sent the rules down to them. I don't know if that's true or not, but if I may make a suggestion: if it's true that you gave them the word, it would really signify things if there were only one set of rules. It would cause less hard feelings.

But such details aside, they are expressing their devotion to you by killing each other by the hundreds. I guess they figure that if one side can wipe the other side out, it will prove that their way of worshipping you is correct, and you'll be pleased with them.

So every day, they lob shells at one another and blow up the usual men, women, children, bystanders, old ladies, and stray dogs. And every day, they take a few moments to thank you for your support and to promise that they'll continue their efforts in your behalf.

Now, not far from there are countries called Iraq and Iran. The Moslems in those countries basically agree on what to call you, but they disagree on some details concerning how best to worship you. So they're killing one another, too.

It's more than a little confusing, though, because in Iran there are people who call themselves Baha'I, and they, too, have their own way of showing their respect for you. Unfortunately for the Baha'I, their way doesn't include killing others who don't share their point of view. So that makes them patsies, and the Moslems in Iran, in their love for you, have been kicking the Baha'I around pretty good.

Just a short missile ride away, there's a lot of religious action going on between a country called Israel and just about everyone else in that neighborhood.

The people in Israel also have their own set of rules for worshipping you, which they say you passed on to them. And they claim that you look more favorably upon them than anyone else. This has always caused a lot of hard feelings because a lot of other groups figure that they're your favorites. (It must be hard being a father figure.) Israel's claim that they're Number One has also made some people wonder this: If the Jews, after all they've been through over the centuries, are really your chosen people, what do you do to somebody you don't like?

Anyway, the Jews and their Moslem neighbors—both of whom claim your complete support—have been going at it for about thirty years. But I don't think they'll ever equal Ireland's record because they'll all eventually have nuclear bombs. Boy, when they start throwing those around, will you have a crowd showing up.

Oh, and I can't forget to mention this final item. Somebody just shot the pope. As you know, he's the leader of one of your largest group of followers here. A very peaceful, non-violent man, by the way, although his followers have been known to shed a few million gallons of blood when their tempers are up.

Anyway, the man who shot him apparently did it because of his devotion to you. It's not completely clear, but this fellow seems to think the pope was in some way responsible for somebody invading the sacred mosque of his religion in a place called Mecca. That, of course, was an insult to you, so he got even in your behalf by shooting the pope.

Well, I know you're busy, so that's all for now.

P.S. I never believed any of those stories going around a few years ago that "God is dead." How could you be? We don't have one weapon that can shoot that far.

***

The above was by Mike Royko, the departed columnist of The Chicago Tribune. Although he wrote the piece nearly 23 years ago (May 4, 1981), it is still relevant today. May we learn something from it as we face a new year that, again, seems filled with bleak prospects, if not hopelessness and despair. Let me start by saying, "Peace to both those whom I may have hurt and to those who have hurt me. Peace, too, to those who intend to continue hurting me. God bless you."

PBL: Blu reaches semis

GAMES TUESDAY (*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Montaña vs ICTSI
4 p.m.—Welcoat vs Viva

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BLU Star, banking on a core made up of past and future pro players, downed Viva Mineral Water-FEU, 74-65, yesterday to barge into the PBL Platinum Cup semifinals at the Pasig Sports Center.

Former pro Jenkins Mesina led the Detergent Kings with 19 points, including a booming three-pointer in the last two minutes that touched off Blu Star's rampaging finish.

It was the seventh win in 11 games for Blu Star, which joined Welcoat and Sunkist-UST in the next round.

Fash Liquid Detergent outlasted Montaña, 69-66, in the other game and boosted its bid for the fourth and last qualifying slot with a 5-5 record. Montaña fell to 4-6.

Peter June Simon nailed two freethrows in the final 11 seconds to secure the win after Christian Coronel had moved the Jewels within 66-67 with a three-point shot.

Blu Star coach Leo Isaac said he does not care if practically everybody in his team had already set their sights on a stint in the pro league, whose numerous scouts regularly troop to the games.

"I just told them that if they play well, then they have better chances of getting noticed," said Isaac. "That way, I help motivate them to win for the team and at the same time showcase their talents for the scouts."

Mesina, the 6-foot-3 forward who played briefly for Purefoods last season before reverting back to the amateur league, went 3-of-5 from the three-point lane.

Viva-FEU still has a slim chance of making the next round if it sweeps its last two games against Fash and Welcoat and the two fail to notch more than five wins.

Scores:

First game:

BLU STAR 74—Mesina 19, Pascual 13, Gatumbato 12, Canaleta 11, Junio 6, Gamboa 4, Victoria 4, Ferrer 3, Lopez 2, Prior 0, Dela Cuesta 0.

VIVA-FEU 65—Miranda 16, Co 13, Jones 8, Margate 7, Napa 6, Misolas 5, Ybanez 5, Isip 2, Rizada 2, Yabut 1, Razon 0, Sinco 0, Santos 0.

Quarters: 18-23, 36-35, 58-50, 74-65.

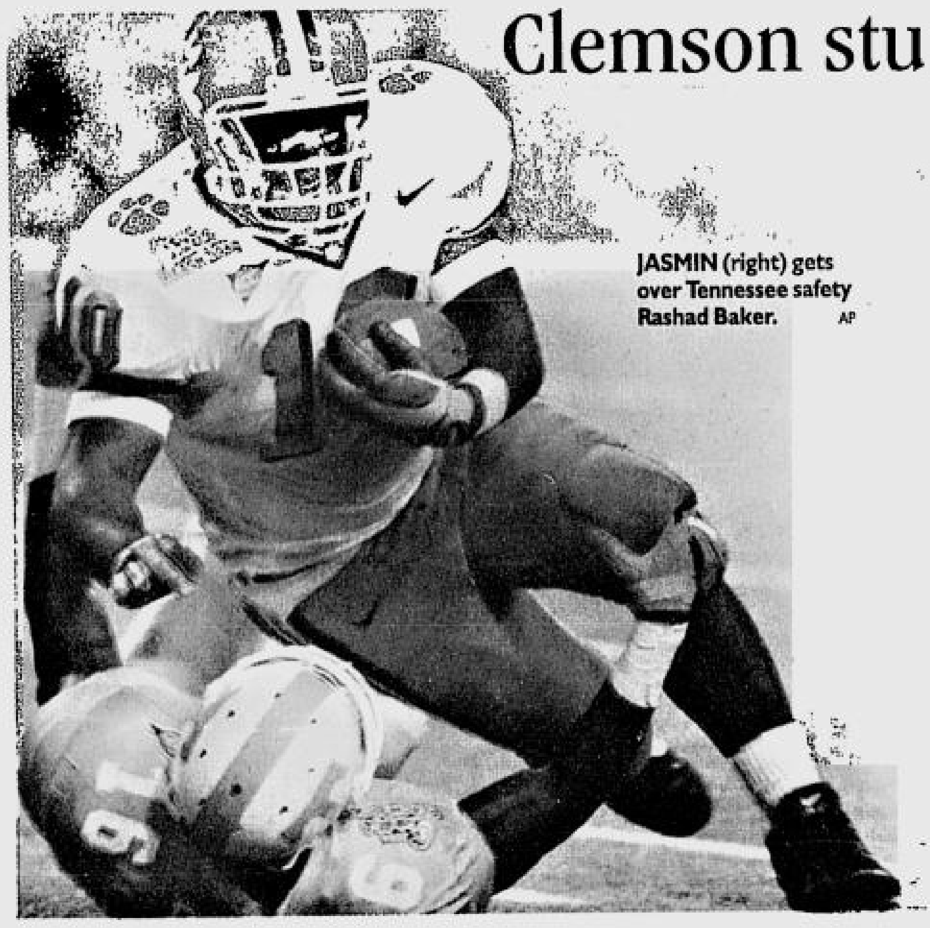
Second game

FASH 69—Salangsang 24, Simon 14, Gelig 10, Tenorio 8, Benedicto 5, Tan 2, Alvarez 2, Gonzales 2, Mercado 2, Moore 0, Dy 0.

MONTAÑA 66—Enrile 15, David 13, Guerrero 10, Coronel 9, Salvador 9, Magpayo 4, Basco 3, Savon 2, Alfad 1, Manigo 0, Saniel 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 17-19, 32-34, 46-52, 69-66.

Clemson stuns Tennessee



JASMIN (right) gets over Tennessee safety Rashad Baker. AP

ATLANTA—Clemson extended Tennessee's woes in the Peach Bowl, thanks to a lot of help from the Volunteers.

Little-used Chad Jasmin, a fullback known mostly for his blocking, ran for a career-high 130 yards and a touchdown, helping the Tigers upset No. 6 Tennessee, 27-14, Friday.

"Chad Jasmin found the holes, and sometimes simply ran over players," Clemson coach Tommy Bowden said. "That was a little demoralizing for Tennessee."

In 45 previous games, Jasmin's best effort was 83 yards in the 2001 Humanitarian Bowl. He got more than 80 just one time this season.

"This is a great way to end my career," Jasmin said. "It really is a dream to get my first 100-yard game in my last game."

Kyle Browning and Duane Coleman added TD runs, helping the Tigers (9-4) to their fourth straight victory.

In Tempe, Arizona, Craig Krenzel left college football with another Fiesta Bowl triumph and another Most Valuable Player award as No. 7 Ohio State held off No. 8 Kansas State, 35-28.

Ell Roberson's comeback, meanwhile, fell one touchdown short in a game many thought he would not play. Krenzel, who finished his Ohio State career 24-3 as a starter, matched his career high with four touchdown passes—two each to Michael Jenkins and Santonio Holmes. *AP*

No wins for KBL

ONE WINNER

Edwin Villanueva

WHAT do the *bayang karerista* want to see for local racing in 2004?

Under the categories "More" and "Less," here are their wishes for the Year of the Monkey:

More:

- Major races at the Racetrack/Club of the Year 2003—Philippine Racing Club
- Wins for Bong Guce, Jeff Zarate, Dhunoy Raquel, Bornok Borbe, Buchoy Daquis and Analyn Reloto
- Wins for the Esguerra and Puyat stables
- Promising gallopers from the Esguerra stable
- OTBS all over Metro Manila, particularly in Quezon City, Caloocan and Sampaloc, Manila
- Wins for Red Star Rising
- Sales and record-breaking events at the PRCI
- Stakes races with juicy prizes backed by the Philracom under Jimmy Dilag
- Big races under the auspices of the Marho and Philtobo
- Ceferino "Howie" Basilio and Ira Herrera analysis and tips, preferably at the Santa Ana Park where racing fans want them to be based.
- Racecalls by Ira "Mr. Three and Fifty to Travel" Herrera. ("*Sana siya na lang lagi*," commented one racing fan).
- Winning tips from Mr. 999.
- Younger and presentable lady tellers at the OTBS and two racing clubs.
- Talented apprentice jockeys
- Suspensions and penalties to erring jockeys
- Races pitting local and imported gallopers
- Sales in the WTA, Pick 6 and Pick 5 events
- Interviews of apprentice and not-so-well-known jockeys

Less:

- Wins or none at all for horseowners and trainers belonging to the KBL (Kunats Be Located) faction
- Major races at the "*wa*-class" racetrack
- Rides or none at all for jockeys notorious for "viajes" or "perders.
- Delays of races at the "*wa*-class" racetrack
- Interviews or none at all of officials when races are about to begin
- Unhappy incidents like last year's gun-pointing, er, cell phone-pointing controversy
- Races pitting brothers against each other
- Racecalls or none at all by over-excited and/or "nakakaantok" club announcers

***

As we brace for a new racing season, let's hope those wishes are fulfilled.

***

E-mail One Winner at evillanueva@inquirer.com or edongvilla@yahoo.com.

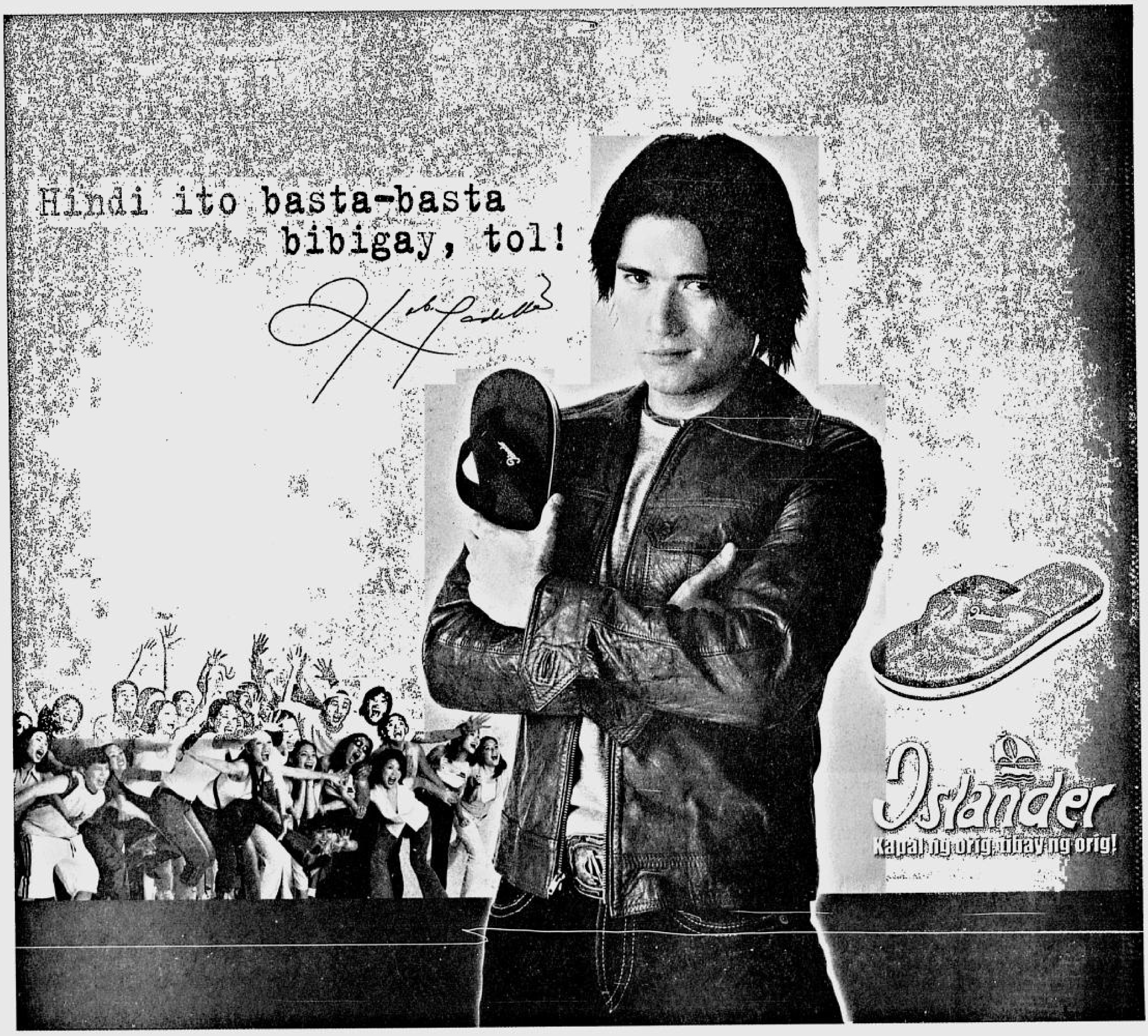
Manning named MVP

DALLAS, Texas—Heisman Trophy finalist Eli Manning led the Mississippi Rebels to a narrow 31-28 win over the Oklahoma State Cowboys in Friday's Cotton Bowl.

Manning, in his final game at Mississippi (10-3), threw for 259 yards and two touchdowns and ran a yard for a third, earning MVP honors.

After the match, Rebels coach David Cutcliffe lauded Manning, whose older brother Peyton is a key performer for Indianapolis in the NFL.

Peyton was drafted first overall in 1998 and there is speculation that Eli could follow suit this year. *Reuters*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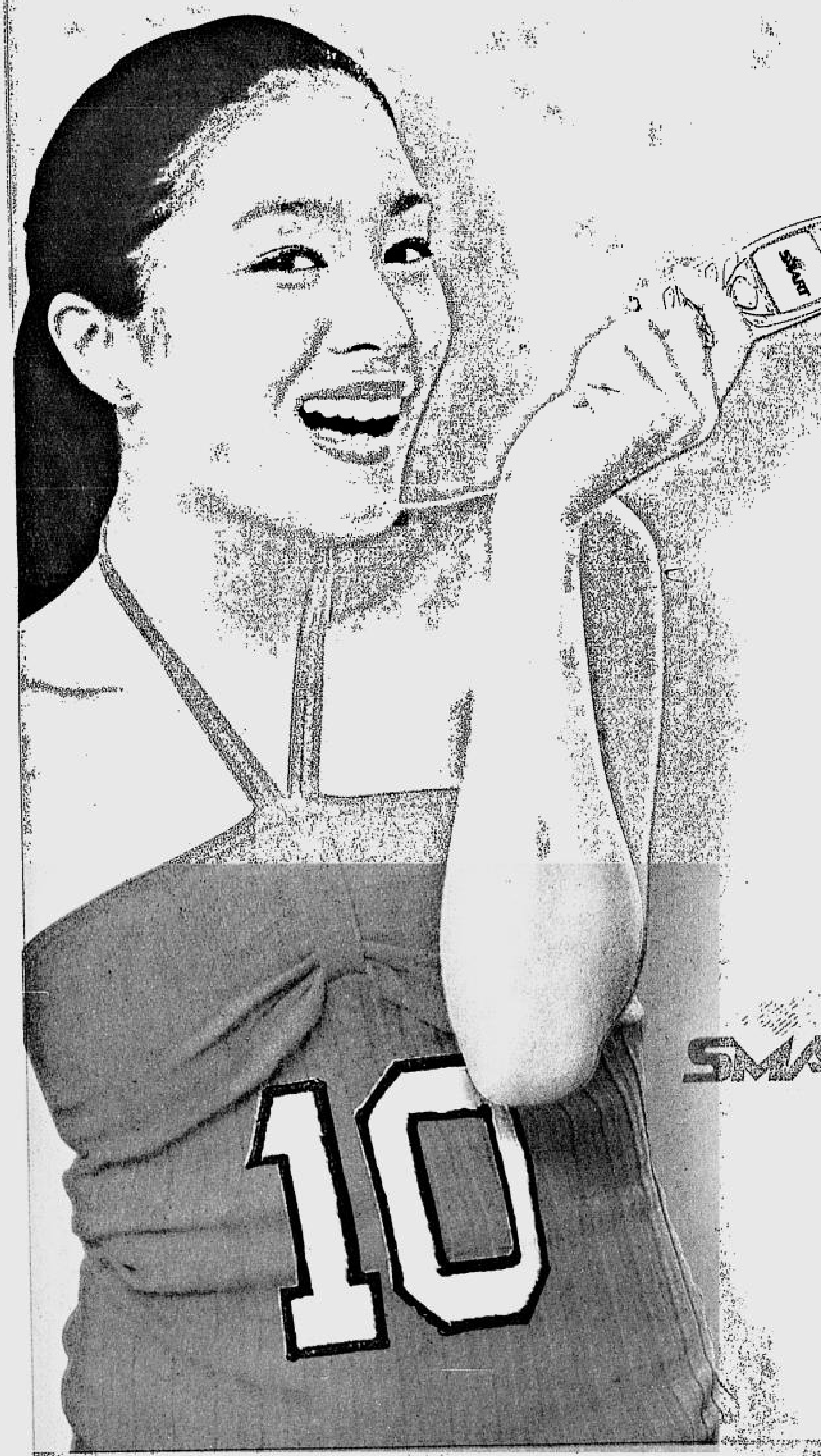

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Bert Nievera, wife leave Martin poorer by millions

Couple said to owe other people, Country Waffle workers

By Marinel R. Cruz

SINGER Bert Nievera and his wife Carol flew to the United States a few days before Christmas and are said to have left millions in debts to several people, including Bert's son, Martin Nievera.

"Martin tried to help his father," Martin's mother and Bert's former wife, Conchita Razon, told INQUIRER Entertainment last night. "But when he lent his father money, he didn't know what it was for."

INQUIRER Entertainment learned from an important show business figure that Bert owes his son about P3 million.

Martin is in the United States for a series of shows in Las Vegas.

Bert and Carol are said to also owe money to other show biz personalities like Annabel Rama, singer-pro

BERT/ A27

THE NIEVERAS are said to have flown to America, while Bert's son Martin (left) is doing a series of shows in Las Vegas.

'Bridal Shower': A very funny movie about very real women

CHERRY TOPS. Picache is as delicious as the cake she eats in one scene.

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.
Contributor

REVIEW

IT IS not quite as hard as it used to be to make a movie about women, but to make one that is as entertaining and welcoming to men as it is for its target audience is still rare.

If women, as that self-help book says, are indeed from Venus (and men from Mars), then you could say "Bridal Shower" is required viewing for Venusians. But this Martian for one wouldn't mind sitting in. The movie, thanks to a crisp and witty script by first-time scriptwriter Chris Martinez and the sensitive direction by Jeffrey Jeturian ("Tuhog," "Pila-Balde"), is fluid and flat-out funny, at times, even soulful and eccentric. I can't really recall the last time I saw a local movie fill a theater with so much laughter. If you can't like a movie like this, then you need to have your pulse checked.

"Bridal Shower" is a romantic comedy with an ensemble story about three single women trying to cope with the opposite sex as best they can, each looking for a man with just the right chemistry. The movie could very well be the cinematic answer to Freud's deathbed question, "What do women want?" But Virginia Woolf, for sure, would not be too happy with the answer.

Near expiration

The three women—Tates (Dina Bonnevie), Katie (Cherry Pie Picache) and Sonia (Francine Prieto), savvy advertising executives with disposable incomes—are all in pursuit of the same something, mostly love, sex and marriage, though not necessarily in that order. I suspect Woolf, who more or less invented feminism with "A Room of One's Own," would hate these three with every atom of her being.

Tates and Katie both know they're getting past their sell-by date. Like Mae West, the Hollywood and Broadway star of the 1930s, they probably want "more men in their life and more life in their men." But they're not getting any younger, and since their hoped-for dream men never materialize, they've learned to compromise their idea of Mr. Right. No longer are they intent on landing a man who has all the smooth moves and who could sweep them off their feet instantly. They just want love, of some kind, and it doesn't seem to matter if such love comes from integrity-deprived men.

Tates, who seems to have a history of hedonism she wants to forget (comically told through brief flashbacks), settles for the character of Christian Vasquez: a car salesman much younger than her, who uses her to pay for his annulment then dumps her after he gets it. You can't blame the guy entirely, though he is a jerk. Tates' neurotic and nerve-wracking pursuit of marriage would likely drive any healthy man crazy. And the combination of immaturity and female rage that boils within her make her patently unlovable, unless she spends some time on a shrink's couch.

As real as it gets

Katie is a woman who's well versed in the luxuriantly guilty pleasures of really good desserts. She's supposed to be the plump and plain looking girl of the movie, although even with a rubber suit

BRIDAL/ A27

'I'm tired of sexy roles'

"I HAVE my limitations," Rica admits.

By Nini Valera

"MY MOM and I have decided that it's about time I stopped baring," said Rica Peralejo, who showed her breasts in at least a couple of her movies. "I'm already bored with bold movies. My acting is always the same."

Rica, star of "Malikmata" in the Metro Manila Film Festival, stressed that she had not gone all the way in doing steamy sex scenes.

"I have my limitations," she told INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview. "I only agreed to breast exposure. No mashing, no pumping, no touching of the private parts, no frontal nudity."

She also admitted that her breasts constantly change sizes, but insisted that she has not augmented her bust size.

"That's why, every now and then, they would get small," Rica said, laughing. "When I lose weight, they get smaller. They become bigger when I gain weight."

As if to prove her new found resolve to not go sexy again in the movies, Rica does not get naked in "Malikmata," a production of OctoArts.

Rica plays Sarah, who sees dead people and who killed them. She leads co-star Marvin Agustin to the murderer of his grandmother (Barbara Perez).

But the pragmatic Rica is not expecting an acting award for her role in the movie, a sleek thriller light years away from the shakes, rattles and rolls genre popular in the '80s.

"*Hindi naman* award *ang habol namin dito* (We're not after the awards with this movie)," said the young star. "We're after the box office (results)."

US tour

Horror films have a track record at the tills, especially during festival season, sales figures show. The latest horror film to rake at the tills was "Singsing ni Lola."

"When I did 'Tatarin,' that was a movie made for awards," said Rica. "But *tinadtad talaga ito*."

She is the first to criticize her part in any movie and likes to hear from people her acting flaws.

"That's how I learn," she confided.

The actress had just arrived from a cross-country concert tour in the US.

"I am very happy with the results," Rica said. "The shows were all very successful."

She even got to perform in Alabama, which she described as "redneck" country.

Cruel jokes

The only black spot in her US sojourn was when she received calls from people in the Philippines, including the mother of her boyfriend Bernard Palanca, asking about the rumor that Bernard and fellow actor Piolo Pascual had died in an accident in New York City. The news had circulated in Manila via text messages, eventually reaching Rica in the US.

"I was in Los Angeles at that time, I think that was Dec. 10, when Bernard's mother called," Rica related. "She was apologetic about bothering me, but I could hear the panic in her voice. I also panicked when I heard the news."

But it turned out that the text message was a hoax.

"I found out—eventually that Bernard was only sleeping in his hotel room at the time he was supposed to have been killed," Rica recalled.

Still, Rica had sleepless nights over the incident.

"I myself had been a victim of a cruel joke that also started as a text message," she revealed. "It happened two years ago, and that time, it was supposed to have been a good friend who had died.

"I started crying already. *Naglulupasay na ako sa sahig. 'Yun pala*, it was just a joke. But what a cruel joke."

Sleepless week

Rica is also a victim of panic attacks that had already sent her once to the emergency room.

"The attack was triggered by my drinking two cups of brewed coffee," she said. "That time, I had worked one week straight without sleeping. On the one night that I wasn't working, I had to entertain friends. So I drank two cups of brewed coffee. That brought on a panic attack and I was rushed to a hospital."

Rica admits to being hyperactive.

"I just can't keep still," she said. "I have to be busy doing things."

But for the holidays, Rica spent several days lolling under the sun and playing on the white sand beaches of Boracay. But Christmas was not the same this year for Rica.

"I wished my brother Philip and sister Joanne, who are both living in the US, could be with us this Christmas," she said. "*Kumukonti na kami. Tatlong pamangkin ko nasa* States *na rin*. Only four of them are here. It's not the same without everybody."

Premiere makes successful comeback

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE'RE happy to see that Premiere Productions has resumed making movies by way of the Metro Film Fest entry, "Captain Barbell." Premiere's comeback has been made sweeter by the fantasy-action film's good showing at the tills (it was one of the two frontrunners when the festival opened last Dec. 25).

Premiere is one of our oldest movie production outfits, and has distinguished itself through the years with its gritty action dramas. In the '50s, it was one of the Big Four studios that dominated the film scene, along with the Sampaguita, LVN and Lebran movie companies. With its long experience and many achievements, Premiere should continue to be a strong, positive force in the daunting task of turning the Filipino film industry's currently flagging fortunes around.

We trust that Premiere's successful comeback will encourage Sampaguita and LVN to similarly resume production this year, so that the industry and its viewers can benefit from their experience and expertise as well.

Another important trait that veteran studios like Premiere, Sampaguita and LVN have in common is their owners' genuine and abiding love for filmmaking. This is further boosted by their pride in their work, which has enabled them to come up with some excellent film products through the years.

With the influx of some fly-by-night producers in the past couple of decades, these positive traits have been co-opted by much less admirable attitudes and qualities that have resulted in the quickie, sleazy formula flicks that have helped cause the industry's severe decline.

If veteran studios like Premiere, Sampaguita and LVN resume production on a regular basis, they would go a long way in restoring the Filipino movie industry's proper focus on creativity and professionalism.

Feedback

FROM **Chelsea R. Teves** of Makati City: "I'm so glad that musical films have become popular again, after many years of being upstaged by newer kinds of movie productions. I myself want to go into the production of Filipino musical films. Do you think there is a market for them? Also, please list some directors of musical movies whose works I can study, to add to my knowledge about the film genre."

NUT'S NOTES: Some Filipino musical films have been produced in the past ("Sinta," "King Khayyam and I"), with varying degrees of success. With a lot of planning and audience testing, new musicals could do well with today's viewers. However, since most local moviegoers are quite young, the musicals may have to be about teenagers.

As for acclaimed directors of movie musicals you can learn from, try to view the films of **Busby Berkeley** and **Stanley Donen**.

Berkeley began his career as a dance director on Broadway. He was brought to Hollywood in 1930 by producer **Samuel Goldwyn** to stage the musical numbers for "Whoopee," a film starring **Eddie Cantor**.

Berkeley went on to join Warner, where he was given a free hand to transform the Hollywood musical. His work was innovative, dazzlingly imaginative, erotic and magical.

He combined the precision of military drill with daring camera work, which turned bevies of

PREMIERE/ A27

What makes for juice?

JUICE

Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon

INTO the new year, it wouldn't hurt to spell out what "Juice" is about. This way, those who never liked it can better tell why they don't, and those who do can better stretch their good will.

It was back in '78, as a staff writer for **Rod Reyes'** Celebrity magazine, that I had my first introduction to local show biz.

That was when I met directors **Brocka, Bernal, Chionglo, Borlaza, Suzara, Guillen,** and **Abaya;** talent managers **Douglas, Lolit, Ethel, Alfie, June,** and **Bibsy;** and stars **Boyet, Jay, Amy, Charito, Lolita, Gina, Vi, Guy** and others, some of whom are, sadly, gone now.

Singularly and together, they showed me a world of many highs and lows and few in-betweens. They told tall tales, fell in and out of loyalties, ate intrigue for breakfast, and went to bed with temporary loves. They worked long hours, too—at the editing room, on the set, in the dubbing studio, on the promo tour. Then they ended the morning with a drink. Life was lived at the edge. Excitement crackled.

And although that was a brief two-year stint, with me going on to write about human rights and martial rule, patrimony and the protest movement in the next 20 years, I never really left show biz. After all, even general-interest publications understood they could not survive without their fair share of entertainment pages, then or now. As such, I got me my fair load of show-biz assignments.

More to the point, entertainment—movies, radio, television, stage—*is* part of our arts and culture even if it kills the snobs to think so, *is* not at all divorced from literature, which happens to be the primary field I trained for, and *is* one alive and lush environment I cannot ignore if I tried.

I'm hooked—and all I have to do is think Brocka and Bernal.

Exalted directors

To this day, I am absolutely grateful to the gods for dumping me within shouting distance of those two wild and exhilarating souls in the time they had hereabouts.

Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal showed me how hugeness of talent can stand so comfortably beside largeness of heart—spoiling me forever for that kind of mix in anyone calling himself "artist."

The two—incidentally, no two personalities were more unalike—fought like hell to make their films, and then fought some more to get them shown. **Imelda Marcos** moved to block Bernal's complex and superior "Manila by Night" and Brocka's raw and powerful "Kapit sa Patalim," films that she, as the other half of what then was known as the conjugal dictatorship, decreed damaging to the country's image.

In effect, the two fought to expand the space for all artists, the space without which even plenty would be empty. And this they did, in one exhausting anti-censorship battle after another, and at a time too when imprisonment and torture—by the likes of **Ping Lacson,** if you were picked up in Cebu, Davao, Iligan—were immediate threats.

And finally, they fought to bring a dictatorship down—by protecting the Leyte refugees, marching with the drivers in Cubao, drafting a new Constitution, and lending a hand to the national democratic front.

Brocka and Bernal *are* why local show biz was exciting for me then. **Jeffrey Jeturian, Lav Diaz,** and **Erik Matti** are why it remains so for me today.

These young ones have a measure of the gift of the two giants who came before; it remains to be seen if they have a measure of their guts.

The synergy

But directors are not alone what keeps the entertainment scene sizzling.

There is great acting going on on that big screen all the time—with **Vilma Santos** showing the way, and **Cherry Pie Picache** showing what we should be wanting more of. Meantime, among the young men, **Mark Anthony Fernandez,** with his talent and looks, is a cut above the rest on any day.

And how to ignore the beautiful girls just walking around in show biz? The medium is exactingly visual, and there's no getting away from faces the camera will love. Luckily, beauty can be found in abundance in local show biz.

As for our producers, brave souls they.

So stricken is our movie industry, it's good it even logged 65 films for 2003. The numbers just keep going down, says PAMI president June Torrejon. In 2002, we had "almost 100" films. And the last time we had 200 was six long years ago!

But our producers keep on, despite taxes that kill, piracy that maims, TV that's overexposing the stars, and DVD home viewing that's supplanting the moviegoing habit. Awesome, too, that they not only not give up, they actually risk investing in grand productions like "Filipinas" and "Mano Po 2."

Equally awesome is the battle of the networks—which spells some good for us. For their competition does push talent fees and production values higher, after which we dare hope quality programming follows—within this lifetime.

BROCKA directing Mega Star Cuneta

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUMMIT PUBLISHING LIBRARY

Now, if Tony Boy Cojuangco can only apply his formidable intelligence and even more formidable funds into making Channel 5 the third major player—again, within this lifetime—it should be a real gift. Viewers can certainly do without the monopoly.

And our writers! If they weren't half as good, do you even think they can resurrect the already dead in those *telenovelas*?

Imagine what they go through: The producer gives them the cast, around which they're told to weave plots and subplots, with subcharacters with subterranean motives, following a set theme and fixed ending. When they're done, they're told that, uh, casting has changed, two of the stars have come to blows, and now they need to rewrite the story, not around the matriarch, but the eldest child, which of course snaps the story toward a completely strange direction.

You'd think stories were being ordered off a menu! But bet on it: Our writers will deliver.

And this holds true for writing for the movies, too!

Ever changing

AS YOU can see, the entertainment business is not for the faint of heart. But so is any creative field, where ever-changing ideas are the way to perfection, created under a deadline pushing against the ever-changing tastes of a dwindling audience.

At the end of the day, there are still gems fit for the archives, loads of excitement for the fans, and a little something left for a column like "Juice."

In show biz, something can always go wrong, but not everything always does.

Bert Nievera, wife leave Martin . . .

From page A26

ducer Ayen Munji's mother, and singer-actress Jinky Llamanzares' mother, Mila.

Bert, who as a balladeer was known as the "Johnny Mathis of the Philippines," and his wife Carol brought the popular California restaurant chain Country Waffles to the Philippines, with the first local branch opening in Greenhills, San Juan.

The couple also franchised the Country Waffles branches in Libis and on Bohol Avenue in Quezon City, at the Glorietta 4 in Makati and the one soon to open in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

The Nieveras also reportedly owned the franchise to the Bubba Gump restaurant in Greenbelt 3 in Makati City.

Carol is also the chair of Hard Rock Café at Glorietta 3.

Business insiders said a group of Americans last month took over the operations of Bubba Gump.

Llamanzares refused to talk to INQUIRER Entertainment about the issue. Rama was "indisposed," according to movie writer Jun Lalin, who handles TV bookings for Rama's actor husband Eddie Gutierrez and their children Ruffa and Richard.

Lalin said he was not aware of any debt that the Nieveras owed Rama. "I'd have to check it with *Tita* Annabel first," Lalin told INQUIRER Entertainment yesterday.

In business circles, it is said that Bert and Carol left the country after they received death threats from employees of Country Waffles Greenhills.

The Nieveras allegedly have not been paying the Country Waffles Greenhills employees their salaries for three months now.

INQUIRER Entertainment tried to reach Martin's manager, Joji Dincong, but failed to contact him.

Entertainment publicist Hanzel Villafuerte said he resigned as Hard Rock Café publicist last September after hearing rumors that the restaurant would soon close down.

Villafuerte said he did not work with the Nieveras closely but with Hard Rock general manager Ceso Calison.

INQUIRER Entertainment tried to call Calison last Saturday but he would not take the call.

In 2001, contractor Antonio "Jun" Achurra Jr., owner of Je-An Supreme Builders & Sales Corp., claimed that the Nieveras owed him P7.5 million, which he said was part of the P33 million used to build the Country Waffles branches in Libis and on Bohol Avenue.

The Quezon City Regional Trial Court granted Achurra an order of attachment, freezing the property of the Nieveras.

The Nieveras denied that they still owed Achurra.

The Quezon City RTC lifted the freeze order, allowing the Nieveras to recover their Honda CRV, Nissan Patrol and Jaguar.

'Bridal Shower': A very funny…

From page A26

on, Picache is still a fine looking lady—which makes me wonder about her character's brutalized self-esteem. Katie meets this macho dancer (Alfred Vargas) in the bridal shower (hence the title) they arranged for Sonia, and the sight of the stud makes her stubbornly optimistic; that someone as wounded and cautious as her, someone who's probably loved and lost a lot of times, hasn't lost hope after all. Katie knows she's supposed to know better and hold out for something real, but maybe, just maybe, this is as real as it gets for her.

The scenes between Picache and Vargas are by far the most emotionally satisfying in the movie because they are the ones where man and woman find not only what they're looking for but, surprisingly, something better; and also because they have a defiantly different sensibility, ranging from the broadest slapstick comedy to the most depressive hopelessness (sometimes we get both extremes in the same scene.)

The best in the cast

Picache, the best actress in the cast, plays Katie with such comical impudence and pathos that it's impossible not to like her. She delivers a standout performance. I hate to be a spoiler but there is this one scene almost at the movie's end when she's left sitting alone in a coffee shop, finding refuge in another of her extravagant indulgences, a chocolate cake with lots of cream. She just sits there as if wanting to avoid the camera's gaze almost entirely. She looks slantwise and smiles to herself, and though the tears don't fall, you can sense her pain, of having let a good thing slip away.

Katie doesn't ask much. Just to be a sad clown sitting there, eating cake, half foolishly and half-beguilingly, in the center ring of the circus, while certain people in the audience are probably saying, "That's me. I know just how she feels."

Although not as interesting as Katie, Bonnevie's Tates offers some worthwhile moments. Katie and Tates are basically aspects of the same personality: two women stuck in a morass of loneliness. They've both taken their lumps; it's just that Tates is the more sexual being of the two.

Embarrassing men

Prieto, who's anatomy could well induce a heart attack (if you saw "Liberated," you'd know what I mean), is passable in portraying the transformation of a young woman putting aside the distractions and infatuations of girlhood while considering a marriage proposal from a rich boyfriend who could guarantee her family's future (or so she thinks). She has to make that difficult choice between the milking cow and this other guy, a penniless artist who gives hot sex and who could be her potential soulmate (or so she thinks again).

The performances of the men in the movie would probably make "Martians" like me want to sit low in their seats. But hey, this isn't a movie about men; it's about women.

They may not be the women who can be independent and strong and live fully rounded lives even if true love doesn't come along. They may not be what the Virginia Woolf-reading women want to see on the big screen. But they're real women nonetheless, who bicker, fight, weep and laugh, eventually gaining some insights through their joys and sorrows. It's the kind of woman's movie I'd pay to see, not just because it crackles with entertainment, but also because it's brashly human.

Premiere makes successful comeback

From page A26

beautiful young women into kaleidoscopic visions of water lilies, violins and jigsaw puzzles. It was an indulgence of the American Dream for weary audiences recovering from the Great Depression.

Berkeley gave viewers such gloriously over-the-top numbers as By a Waterfall ("Footlight Parade," 1933), Lullaby of Broadway ("Gold Diggers of 1935"), and the rare socially-conscious reminder, like My Forgotten Man ("Gold Diggers of 1933").

Later, at MGM, his exuberant routines for **Judy Garland** and **Mickey Rooney** were simpler. Although he directed a number of films, he is most revered for his dance direction. With the demise of the musical, he retired.

For his part, Donen first became a dancer in Broadway musicals, starting in 1940 with "Pal Joey," which made a star of **Gene Kelly.** Donen worked with Kelly on the choreography of the 1941 show "Best Foot Forward," and went to Hollywood for the 1943 film version.

He was the choreographer of other musicals like "Cover Girl," "Holiday in Mexico," and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." Still with Kelly, he co-directed "On the Town," "Singin' in the Rain" (two of the best film musicals, in our book), and "It's Always Fair Weather."

Donen's solo musicals include "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" and "Funny Face." From 1958, he worked mostly in Britain, directing glossy comedies adapted from the stage. One of his last films, "Two for the Road," starring **Audrey** and **Albert Finney,** was very well received.

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Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Doctor learned entrepreneurship from balancing studies and work

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

DR. JOHN L. Evangelista, president and chief executive officer of the Healthway Medical Clinics, laments the fact that there seems to be a waning pride among Filipinos in the dignity of labor.

Evangelista tells the INQUIRER that it is such a waste because keeping even the simplest of jobs firmly inculcates the value of hard work, thus, preparing a person better for bigger responsibilities.

FIRST JOB

He knows whereof he speaks because he grew up in a house with no helpers. He and his six other siblings were taught by their parents to do their part in managing the household. The four boys knew how to cook and the three girls learned how to do simple house repairs.

It was not a surprise then that John, the youngest in the family of an engineer and a schoolteacher, would start working at an early age.

"I started working as a dental assistant for my sister-in-law who had a dental clinic in the Binondo area. I was in third year high school then and I earned about P20 a day from developing the film, mixing the filling compound and doing some cashiering," Evangelista says.

He found fulfillment in earning his own money, but he did not stop there. He used his salary to buy imported goods in Dau, Pampanga, and sold them to his classmates.

That was his first foray into entrepreneurship. He used his sales to grow his bank account and buy himself a pair of rubber shoes.

He kept a series of odd jobs throughout his academic life. While taking up his pre-med course at the University of the Philippines, he took advantage of the long breaks between classes to earn about P1,000 a month as a library assistant at the College of Law.

"I thought to myself that it would be a waste of time if I did nothing between classes so I worked and I really valued its importance," he says.

He was able to work and study medicine at the same time because he had his heart set out on being a doctor, an ambition that he had since he was in grade school.

"When I was in elementary, my mother had a gallbladder operation at the University of Sto. Tomas Hospital. Ever since then, I admired doctors and promised myself that I would be a doctor someday. After high school, I made sure that I would study at UP since all my siblings, all six of them, were from UP," he says.

Evangelista continued balancing work and school even when he left the Philippines to take up his postgraduate studies at the University of Navarra in Spain.

"There were a lot of available jobs there. In the summer or spring, I would do some gardening. It was something I really enjoyed because it was very therapeutic and Spain is a very beautiful country," he says.

EVANGELISTA today

Evangelista says his decision to take postgraduate studies in Spain was one of the major turning points in his life.

"This really opened my eyes to a bigger world full of new ideas. This further molded me to be an entrepreneur by heart," he says.

When he came back to the Philippines in 1990, he first worked as a university professor before he seriously started his career in healthcare management in the mid-1990s.

He and a group of investors were among the first to put up an outpatient clinic, Clinica Manila. His major break came when a Singaporean company (Vista) got him to start its healthcare business in the Philippines.

Evangelista says the Vista people—Thomas Lee, Edward Oh and Carl Stanifer—taught him the ropes of modern healthcare management, which he introduced in Manila through the Healthway Medical Clinics.

He credits them for helping him become the chief executive that he is today along with Dr. Antonio Periquet, who first introduced him to Philippine healthcare management; Dr. Emiliano Canonigo, who encouraged him to fulfill his dreams; and colleague Dr. Hernan Delizo, who opened him to new ideas in healthcare management.

Healthway Medical Clinics is the country's biggest chain of mall-based outpatient medical centers. It is an affiliate of GenRx Healthcare Inc., which aims to be the premier specialized outpatient healthcare service provider in Asia, particularly in China and Hong Kong.

The Healthway group also includes the Clarity Aesthetic and Laser Center, which offers dermatological services, as well as weight management and dental treatments.

The group's philosophy is to mobilize the best medical technologies, health approaches, management resources and capital and apply them to state-of-the-art outpatient medical centers.

Evangelista says his early exposure to entrepreneurship and earning his own money is invaluable to serving the company well as CEO.

SAN Sebastian, Spain 1988

"The values I learned from working and making the most out of my time helped me in running the company, especially in the areas of expense management and having an entrepreneurial spirit—that is, to always come up with something new to improve operations," he says.

Evangelista says that setbacks will always be there, but a determined CEO would always find a way to get ahead and surmount difficulties.

To become a CEO, Evangelista advices people to work hard.

"Do not let setbacks pull you down, however small or big it may be. Just go forward and do what you love to do," he says.

He also stresses the importance of prayers.

"Prayer was foremost in our family. Up to now, I have the habit of going to a mass and praying the rosary daily. I try to inculcate this to my kids," he says.

Evangelista has two children.

DOCTOR/B

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Top 7 books executives loved to read in 2003

By Dante M. Velasco
Contributor

EXECUTIVE READ

READERS of "Executive Read" have varied tastes and interests. The responses of readers—the ever increasing new and the loyal ones—have affirmed the decision of the Sunday Biz editor not to limit books to "strictly business," but to expand coverage to "books executives read."

This has virtually opened up this section to a vast array of books executives read—from the serious to the light-hearted, from the purely inspirational to those that demand analysis and reflection, from those with theoretical framework to personality profiles that flesh out theory with real-life accounts.

As a year-end treat to our readers, we have chosen the top seven books reviewed in the "Executive Read," based on reader responses mainly through e-mails and text messages (from those who know my mobile phone number).

Two more indicators of enthusiastic reader response come from publishers and bookstores - and, yes, request for copies from our growing network of friends and confirmed book lovers!

While some books received more responses than the others, it is not safe to assume that such books outsold everything else. For example, the book on dimensional leadership skills elicited several inquiries via e-mail, including a specific request from a CEO of one of the top five corporations. However, the book on "repairing a reputation" was declared out of stock by all bookstores, leaving me without a copy because I have given mine away.

So, the presentation of the top seven books executives loved to read in 2003 would be chronologica—and they are:

Reputation Marketing, Leading Quietly, Financial Shenanigans, The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Life, Living History: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Leadership Through People Skills, and Anyway.

1. Reputation Marketing. My review of Reputation Marketing, titled "Acquiring a deft hand in reputation repair," appeared early January, 20 days after the President of this country announced her decision not to run for President, calling such act as a "personal sacrifice."

And since the book is all about building a reputation or building a tarnished one, the review took off from the Presidential announcement, lauding such a move as "instructive to practitioners and students of corporate and marketing communication ... to create shifts among power centers and change the configuration of political forces." Almost. (Six months after such a declaration, the state leader made a turnabout.)

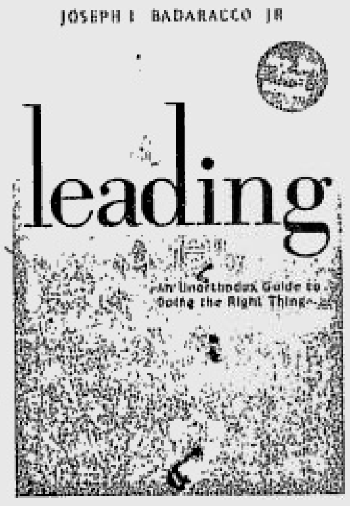
Of course, the book offers some hope. Author Joe Marconi observes: "The public has demonstrated an amazing capacity to forgive and, if not forget, to at least allow another chance."

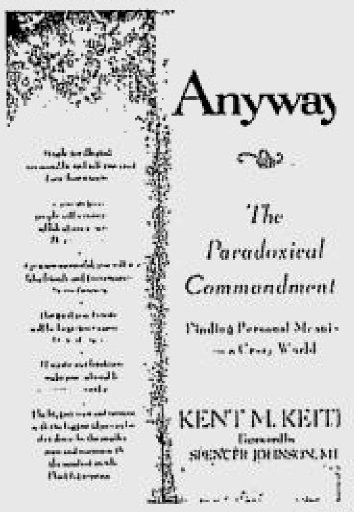
John Rojo, who e-mailed me, and Bobby Manzano from Coca Cola who did not stop until I gave away the book, must have now found out useful insights in the book.

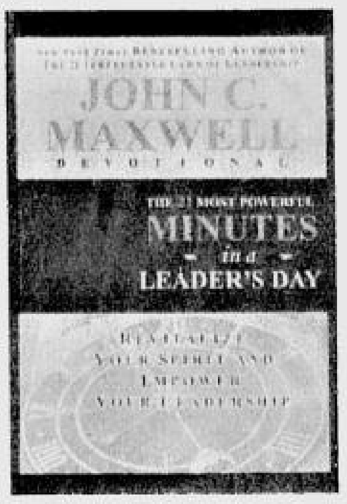
2. Leading Quietly. Subtitled the "unorthodox guide to doing the right thing," the book has received responses from young and promising leaders who found comfort in the review's statement that "there are quiet leaders who, behind the scenes, come up with substantive solutions for big and small problems.

The book brings readers up close and personal with corporate leaders who struggle over ethical issues, who finally end up doing the right thing, were shown the door—but were happy because their "morals were intact."

Readers like Lois Yasay, a prelaw student at University of the Philippines, said she was inspired by the book, perhaps by the statement of Albert Schweitzer quoted in the book. Schweitzer called these quiet leaders the "force that is content with small and obscure deeds, but whose sum is a thousand times stronger" than the "foam" (celebrity leaders) on the waves of a deep ocean."




Anyway
The Paradoxical Commandments
Finding Personal Meaning in a Crazy World
KENT M. KEITH
Foreword by SPENCER JOHNSON, M.D.


JOHN C. MAXWELL
DEVOTIONAL
THE 21 MOST POWERFUL MINUTES in a LEADER'S DAY
REVITALIZE YOUR SPIRIT AND EMPOWER YOUR LEADERSHIP

3. Financial Shenanigans. "Be Sherlock Holmes in detecting accounting fraud" was how we titled an equally explosive title "Financial Shenanigans." The book details the many attempts to "window-dress" financial statements, conceal data, over-value some items, and other practices that auditors must know in order to catch the culprits.

Taking off from the debacle of multinationals Enron, WorldCom and other high-profile accounting crimes, the book—while a bit technical—drew responses from auditors, accountants and CEOs. A comptroller of the Securities and Exchange Commission and a trusted ally of receivers supervising ailing companies wrote to ask about this "eye-opening" book. My only copy was also given away to a senior executive for audit of a large bank—to serve the book's purpose: help detect gimmicks and fraud.

4. The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day. Executives nowadays go for the "soft books"—meaning, those that don't demand too much analysis and require too much cerebral work. In a century where executives seek the "soul" of the corporation and even talk about the "spirit" of golf, we know that the hunger for books that touch the heart must be addressed.

Living History
Hillary Rodham Clinton

We reviewed one such book, "The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day, and titled it "Leadership is, first, an internal matter." The book by John Maxwell is packaged as a devotional material, to be taken in daily bites by executive readers—brief enough to leave some space for meditation and re-thinking.

5. Living History: Hillary Rodham Clinton. At the time when this book was reviewed, two books were bestsellers—a Harry Potter book and Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Living History." I made a wise move to reserve a copy at Powerbooks Alabang, and got mine in 10 days—which made the review possible.

The book on Hillary was attended by curiosity at first ("Is there a whole chapter on Monica Lewinsky?" many asked), and ended—after it was read—with a newfound respect and admiration for the famous First Lady of the United States. E-mails and text messages were a-plenty.

We noted that Hillary's formative years—from child to youth to youth volunteer—were consistent, and so we wrote: "Her youthful years showed a character formed by genes and her generation's burning issues."

6. Leadership Through People Skills. This book received the most e-mail and text messages from readers. It goes to show that executives and managers are ever on the lookout for new ways to deal with the most fascinating and inscrutable resource in organizations—people.

The book offers what it calls the "Dimensional Model of Behavior" and introduces a non-linear approach. That's why we titled the review "Calibrate your leadership approach" because the book guides leaders to fine tune the use of dominance and submission on one hand, and warmth and hostility on the other.

The book has its innate appeal. A chairman and CEO of one of the top energy companies expressed interest in the book. Also, I received an e-mail from Myriam Santiago, not our former Senator,' but one simply interested in truly calibrating her leadership style—and perhaps gives her namesake a run for her money! The director of Holy Cross Press in the Archdiocese of Davao, Franklin Sanchez also wanted to get hold of the book. Jane David asked our help to locate a copy, since the bookstores either didn't have it or have run out of stock.

These responses give us a key message: Many of our readers continue to perfect their leadership styles and are always open to new ideas.

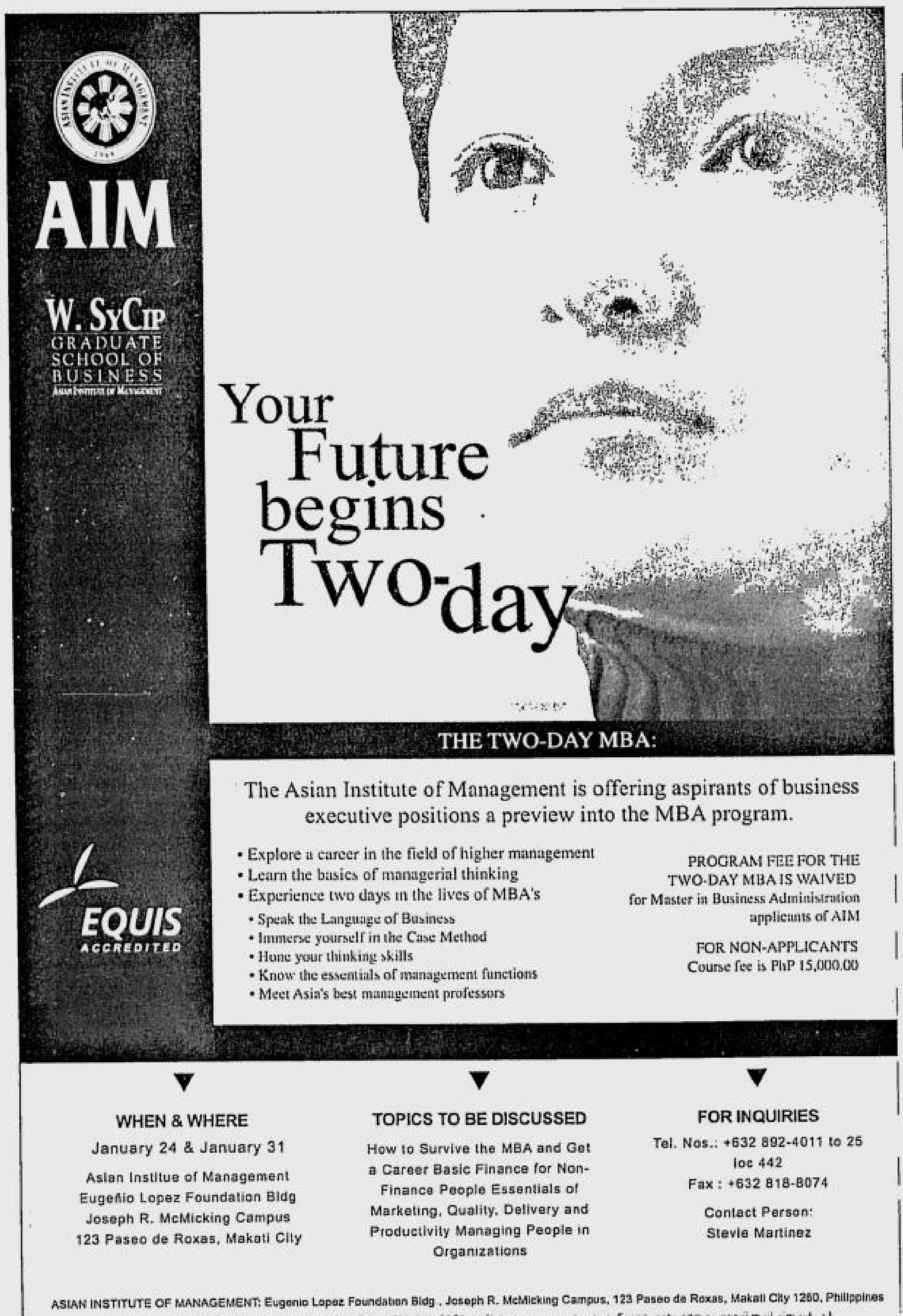
7. Anyway. This one book, found in Libris, a bookstore in BF Homes Parañaque with a branch at the RCBC Plaza, has taken the book-reading public by storm. It is simply titled "Anyway." Gym enthusiasts talked about it, and wondered where to get hold of a copy. An enterprising friend made it a Christmas greeting card. My professor in my Ph.D. class in UP, known for her erudition, said the book "might be good"— based on the review.

And what does the book offer? It has introduced "Ten Paradoxical Commandments" which always ended with the word ... "anyway." For example, "Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway."

I tried these in my lectures and other public speaking engagements—and the audience unfailingly responded with a chorus: "Anyway."

And so we bade goodbye to 2003. How did I keep the energy to read and then review a book twice a month? First, a good friend Filemon T. Berba Jr. sent me a New Year's text message saying, "Don't stop reviewing books." Second, I must really be a hopeless book lover. Book reviewing interferes with my Ph.D. studies, my professorial lectures and my public relations and advocacy practice.

However, I regularly turn in my "Executive Read" manuscript. Anyway. *(dantemv@l-next.net)*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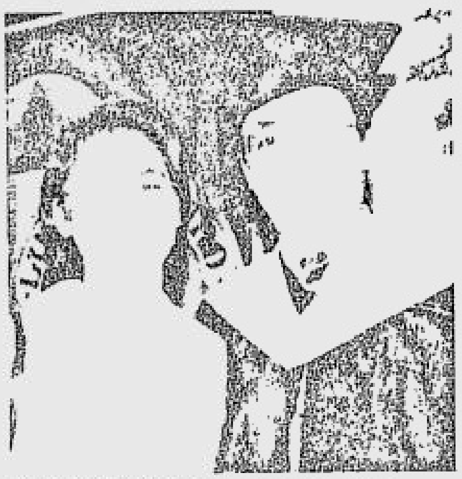
HIGH school graduation 1978

GRADUATION from medical school, 1986


GRADUATION from Ateneo de Manila Graduate School, Masters in Healthcare Management with wife Tina

Doctor learned . . .

From page B1

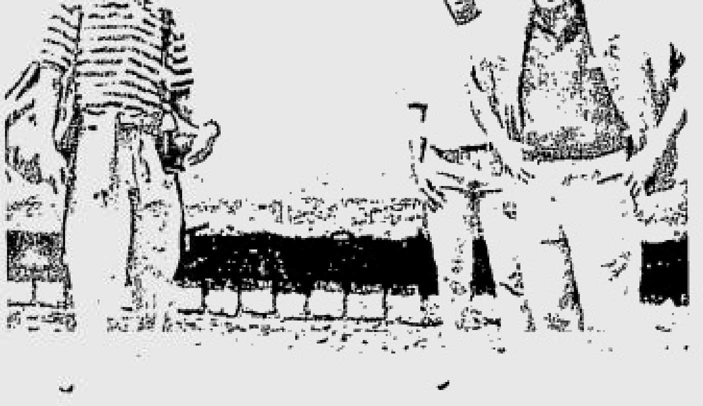
Unlike other CEOs, he finds it easy to balance his flourishing career with family life.

"When I got married at 35 (my wife is 10 years my junior), I promised myself that my family would come first and my work will be for my family. I believe that my wife is very appreciative of this. Balancing is easy if you have the right perspective in life and for me it is this: God, family and the rest. Work is just a tool and not an end in itself. It is a tool to support your family, a tool to be closer to God," he says.

Evangelista also credits his wife for inspiring him to fulfill his dreams. For now, it is to further build on the success of Healthway. But eventually, he wants to go back to the academe to teach.

"I would also like to do counseling and above all, tend a small farm," he says.

FAMILY picture, 1969


SAN Sebastian, Spain 1988 with fellow Filipino students from the University of Navarra (Pamplona, Spain)

Honesty makes auto shop venture last 30 years

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

PINOY ENTREPRENEUR

ONE of the most difficult businesses to maintain is one in the service sector. This is because it is largely dependent on people.

For a service firm to last for decades is a story in itself.

Supreme Motor, a car sales and service firm, recently celebrated its 30th year in the business.

The shop was set up by Robert Tan in October 1973 and it still stands in its original spot—along Yakal Street in Makati City. Over the years, it has accumulated hundreds of corporate and individual clients.

Tan's father was in the surplus business but he ended up bankrupt so the young Robert had to seek employment when he was only 18. He also had to quit school, where he was taking up commerce. He worked in trading firms for several years.

Robert decided to go on his own when he turned 40.

"I had already chosen the people before I quit the job. I had in my mind whom to get," Robert explains.

A friend helped him set up the business. But like most start-ups, it was back breaking for Robert at the start.

"I would leave the house at 6:30 a.m., bring the kids to school and be at work by 7:30," he recalls. His wife, Betty, kept house.

He would usually spend 10 to 12 hours a day at work.

But Robert says he was lucky because he had relatives and friends who helped him. He was able to get good corporate accounts, which include Malayan Insurance, owned by the Yuchengcos, FGU and Ayala. Robert was able to make Supreme one of the accredited car repair shops of big insurance firms.

His previous work in the purchasing section of a trading firm gave him access to a network of suppliers.

He started with six workers. Today, he has 30.

Like most entrepreneurs, he also had his share of learning experiences.

"Before, I relied on the honesty of my workers. They would log in their overtime. But I found out that they would log in, go out and then come back to log out. I also had some people stealing," he says.

Although he had dishonest workers, he made sure Supreme gave honest service to his customers up to this day.

"When you start a business, you are alone. There is nobody to help you. But if you do honest business, people come back," Robert says.

UNDERCHASSIS·MECHA
AND

SUPREME Motor Sales & Serivce Corp. founder Robert Tan

Robert also practiced prudence and avoidance of an ostentatious lifestyle.

Although most of his people are blue collar workers, Robert adopted the white collar approach of holding regular assessment meetings with them to discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

He also made sure his family knows the business. Every summer, his children would go with him to the shop. He would ask them to buy supplies and allowed them to watch the workers.

In 1984, his eldest child, Debbie Mae T. Go, joined the firm. She was placed in charge of administration. Debbie devised a system to minimize pilferage. Whatever was used for that day was put back and the parts that were replaced were turned over.

His other daughter, Arleen Marie, joined the firm in 1999. She was placed in charge of finance, particularly accounting and collecting. She cites that one of the problems these days is the difficulty to collect. Half of Supreme's clients are companies while half are individuals or walk-ins.

Youngest son Raymund is in charge of purchasing for the motor shop.

Although Robert still goes to the shop everyday, he has turned over the management of Supreme to his eldest son, Ricky. Ricky says to this day, they rely on word of mouth for marketing. He says most of their customers recommend them to friends. They usually have 35 cars being repaired at any given time.

They have also updated their machines over the years and have set up a special computerized paint mixing under Dupont, such that even the bigger car companies and car shops have their car paints mixed with them.

Robert and the children regularly hold informal meetings. They admit that they have their disagreements but as Debbie says, they are all very open about their opinions on work.

Ricky says one of the reasons for their length of stay in the business is that they try to impart in their people that although they are the employers they are also their friends.

"We eat with them," he says, adding that many of them have been with the company for 10 years.

To Robert, the reason why Supreme has lasted three decades is:

"Honesty. You don't cheat your customer. You make the right profits. Better salaries for the people. Good, quality work."

KEEPING it in the family: Ricky, Robert, Debbie Mae and Arleen Marie.

Marine engineer makes waves with fancy slippers

By Sharon Wendy A. Robas

IF you go to Boracay Island and do some shopping, one of the stores being flocked by customers is Kaycee Footwear which sells colorful slippers in various shapes and designs.

But you don't need to go that far to see these trendy products because that same store is now in Manila.

Freddie B. Casio, owner of Kaycee Footwear, started in the slippers industry in 1992. He shares that he used to make "ordinary" slippers. He stopped after a year and then ventured into the shoe repair business in his hometown in Calinog, Iloilo. Having a keen eye for business, Freddie also tried selling food products alongside his shoe repair trade.

In 1998, he tried his luck in Boracay Island and put up a stall for his shoe repair shop in the island's *talipapa*, a popular souvenir-shopping hub.

Tourists

Since many tourists frequent Boracay, foreigners would come to his repair shop and ask Freddie if he could make slippers for their big foot sizes. Freddie agreed and made "ordinary" slippers for them.

After a year, visitors in Boracay started to request Freddie to make slippers out of the designs they brought. The always-smiling Freddie readily said yes and the rest, as they say, is history.

Kaycee Footwear, named after Freddie's daughter, has since been known as the maker of customized slippers in assorted designs.

"Aside from foreign vacationers, show biz people (who frequented the island) were our leading customers when I started designing slippers. They wore the slippers while on the beach and other people who saw it would ask where it was made," Freddie says in Filipino.

Freddie, a marine engineering graduate, says one of the first designs he made was a boat-shaped pair of slippers. Soon, he experimented on new designs that would suit his customers' tastes while he still accepted designs brought by the customers themselves.

Slipper designs range from the popular cartoon heroes like Superman and Spiderman to Tazmanian Devil and Winnie the Pooh. Intricate designs like scorpions, butterflies and others are also available.

Freddie, who used to work as a roomboy at the Philippine Village Hotel in the early '80s, couldn't believe that this venture would turn into a success.

Materials

All materials are locally sourced, according to Freddie, with the rubber in different colors as main materials. Customers can also choose from the various designs of straps available.

He says most people became aware of his products through word of mouth from people who visited Boracay.

Freddie also shares that they also did some of the footwear worn by performers in different festivals and school activities in Iloilo.

The slippers cost P100-P150 for kids and P100-P250 for adults. Freddie boasts that their slippers can be made "while you wait." He says it takes about an hour or less to finish a pair depending on the complexity of the design.

Regular customers would encourage Freddie to open a shop in Manila.

Last year, Kaycee Footwear opened a store at the Ayala-MRT station and at the Star City shopping complex, although the MRT store did not last long. As expected, the slippers were a hit and Freddie was more than happy for the positive response of his new customers.

FREDDIE B. Casio has over 100 designs for his footwear today

"Nagustuhan naman nila. Natutuwa sila sa mga designs," Freddie says.

Decor

Although these slippers are actually made to be worn, Freddie shares that it's also an attractive wall décor.

Kaycee Footwear at the Star City continues to draw customers from all walks of life. Framed photographs of show biz personalities with their Kaycee slippers displayed in the store always catches the attention of customers. Aside from slippers, Kaycee Footwear also sells sandals, cell phone cases and still does shoe repairs.

Freddie, 43 and father of three kids, says his wife also helps in the business by taking care of the paper work needed. Although Freddie is based in the province, he gets to visit his store in Star City at least thrice a month, especially during the holiday season where visitors of the complex increased. The "ber-ber" months are peak season for Kaycee Footwear in Manila while summer is the best time in their Boracay store.

Freddie says they make about 50 pairs a day with the help of four to six workers/designers. He was also happy that through this venture, he was able to help some of his relatives and town mates get a job by employing them in his stores.

Aside from the Boracay and Star City stores, Kaycee Footwear has two branches in Iloilo and one in Bacolod City.

Designs

Today, Kaycee Footwear has over a hundred designs, with new designs being introduced every month. Before, Freddie helps in making the slippers but now he just supervises his designers and workers.

Asked if there was a time when he felt like giving up the business, Freddie says: "When the terrorist threat became news, I thought we might closed down because that would mean less foreign visitors in the country and foreigners are our top customers. But I was surprised when more Filipinos got interested in the slippers we make."

Freddie says customers' appreciation of their products make him feel fulfilled. "*Yung marinig mo na sabihin nila na 'ang galing niyo!,' 'ang ganda ng mga gawa niyo,' ang sarap ng pakiramdam. Doon pa lang busog na ako sa papuri*," Freddie beams.

After conquering Manila, what's next for Kaycee Footwear? "*Sana makapag-export kami ng produkto namin. Yun ang dream ko*," Freddie reveals.

Kids get story-telling treat from Santa

By Jerome Aning

ASIDE from giving gifts and shouting his familiar "Ho, ho, ho" Yuletide cheer, Santa Claus found time to sit down with about 40 homeless and poor children at the Coke Museum in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The children, most of them under 5, listened intently as Santa recounted to them in Tagalog the story of the first Christmas.

The kids came from urban poor and farming families at Sta. Rosa's Pook Silangan and other depressed areas. They were gathered by a pastor and several volunteers from the Word & Life Church Christian Fellowship for a special tour which forms part of Coke's social outreach program.

Their destination was the so-called Coke Museum, officially known simply as The Coca-Cola Pavilion, located at the soft drink-bottling firm's Sta. Rosa Plant.

The museum normally caters to students most of the year and gets up to 50,000 visitors annually, according to Arni Dy, Coke's external affairs manager. But on that morning, children from the place that the Coke plant helped turn into a boomtown had the pavilion all by themselves.

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Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

DEPUTATION OF CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS UNDER THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2004 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

PRESENT:

ABALOS, Benjamin S.,	Chairman
TANCANGCO, Luzviminda G.,	Commissioner
JAVIER, Rufino S.B.,	Commissioner
LANTION, Ralph C.,	Commissioner
SADAIN, Mehol K.,	Commissioner
BORRA, Resurreccion Z.,	Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino, Jr. A.,	Commissioner

Promulgated: 30 DECEMBER 2003

RESOLUTION NO. 6498

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code and other election laws, the Commission on Elections may deputize certain departments under the Executive Branch, Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations and Financial Institutions in connection with the May 10, 2004 National and Local Elections.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission on Elections, by virtue of the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code and other related election laws, has RESOLVED to deputize, as it hereby deputizes the following departments under the executive branch, government-owned and controlled corporations and financial institutions, to perform specific duties relative to the conduct of the elections, as follows:

1. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department of Education (DepEd) and its Department Secretary, the Undersecretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, the Provincial / City Superintendents of Schools or Officers-In-Charge thereof, are hereby designated Deputies of the Commission on Elections; and the District School Supervisors, School Principals or Officers-In-Charge thereof, are hereby appointed Assistant Deputies. They shall have the following duties and functions:

The Department Secretary, the Undersecretaries, Regional Directors and Assistant Regional Directors:

Comply with and enforce all orders and instructions of the Commission relative to the election duties and functions of public school teachers in connection with the May 10, 2004 national and local elections, and perform such other measures as are necessary including the use of all public school buildings designated as polling places/centers.

a) The Provincial/City Superintendents of Schools, and Officers-In-Charge thereof:
    a) Submit to the Election Officers (EO) not later than January 26, 2004, the names of public school teachers recommended for appointment as chairmen and members of the Boards of Election Inspectors. (BEIs)
    b) Submit to the EO the names of district supervisors and school principals recommended for appointment as assistants.
    c) Comply strictly with the rules and regulations prescribed herein, and such other resolutions as may be promulgated by the Commission.
b) The District School Supervisors, School Principals or Officers-In-Charge:
    a) Receive all communications from the Commission or its deputies and transmit them to the BEI concerned.
    b) Supervise public school teachers appointed to positions of chairmen and members of the BEI in accordance with the instructions of the Commission.
    c) Receive complaints against any chairman or member of said board and to transmit the same to the Commission or its representatives; and
    d) Adopt, jointly with the Election Officer and the BEI, adequate measures to safeguard election documents and paraphernalia.

The DepEd Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Provincial and City Superintendents of Schools, District Supervisors, School Principals or Officers-In-Charge thereof, and public School Teachers, shall not be transferred or assigned to other positions during the election period, without prior written authority of the Commission.

The following guidelines shall be observed in the appointment of teachers to the BEI:

a) All public school teachers who had served as chairmen or members of the BEI in previous elections shall be given preference for appointment to the same precincts;
b) Where it is necessary to constitute new or additional BEI, preference for appointment shall be given to public school teachers who efficiently served in the 2001 elections, and who are registered voters of the municipality/city;
c) The best qualified public school teachers on the basis of rank, position and salary shall be appointed chairmen; and
d) In case of shortage of public school teachers in the city or municipality for appointment as chairmen and members of the BEI, the city superintendent of schools and/or district supervisors shall immediately notify the EO of such fact.

No conference, seminar, or any school activity, which might interfere, restrict, or prevent the performance of election duties of district school supervisors, school principals and public school teachers, shall be held during the election period except upon prior written authority of the Commission.

The superintendent of schools, district supervisor or school principal shall immediately report to the EO any chairman or member of the BEI who have committed or are committing any serious irregularity or misbehavior in the performance of duties who are disqualified to serve as such. The EO shall relieve said chairman or member and appoint the corresponding substitute who shall immediately be directed to take over.

Immediately after the elections, the Commission and/or school officials concerned, shall file against the erring chairman or member, the appropriate criminal and/or administrative charges in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations of the Commission.

2. THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

The Department of Finance and its Department Secretary are hereby designated deputies of the Commission to enforce and ensure during the election period that:

1) Provincial, City and Municipal Treasurers, shall:
    a) Remain in their present assignments and not be transferred or detailed, whether temporarily or permanently, to another province, city or municipality, except upon written authority of the Commission.
    b) Not be allowed to go on leave of absence from office during the period starting two weeks before and two weeks after election day except upon prior written approval of the Commission. They shall at all times assign responsible employees in their offices to receive telegrams and instructions from the Commission relative to election matters to ensure immediate action thereon.
    c) Not designate temporary or casual employees as Officer-In-Charge of the Office of the Treasurer.
2) All City/Municipal Treasurers shall:
    a) Under the direct orders and supervision of the EO, preserve, take custody and storage of election forms, ballot boxes, paraphernalia, supplies and materials entrusted to them and prevent any loss, destruction, impairment or damage thereof.

       In the discharge of their duties as deputies of the Commission, the City/Municipal Treasurers shall not be subject to the command, control or orders of the city/municipal mayors or other local executive officials. In this respect, it shall be unlawful for the city/municipal mayors or other local executive officials to intervene or interfere in the discharge by these deputies of their duties in connection with the election.
    b) Keep a record of the quantity and serial numbers of official ballots, election returns and ballot boxes allocated for distribution to the various precincts in their respective jurisdiction, and furnish legible copies of such record to the candidates, the EO and the Election Records and Statistics Department (ERSD), Commission on Elections, Manila, immediately after distribution.
    c) Distribute in the presence of watchers if available, the official ballots, election returns and ballot boxes, individually or as part of a kit as may be decided by the Commission, to the Boards not earlier than the first hour on election day. However, the Commission, upon request of the Treasurer, and upon the recommendation of the EO, may authorize the City/Municipal Treasurers, for reasons such as, but not limited to, distance and weather condition in the locality and difficulty of transportation, number of precincts in a city or municipality, and prevailing peace and order, to distribute the election forms, materials, supplies and other paraphernalia to the BEI at an advance date with written notice to the candidates and political parties.

       The BEI shall issue the proper receipt starting clearly the date, the number of sets and the corresponding quantity and serial numbers of the official ballots and ballot boxes and other accountable forms and supplies.
    d) Submit a joint written report with the EO within five days after Election Day to the ERSD, of the quantity and serial numbers of the ballot boxes and accountable forms. A candidate may be furnished copy thereof upon written request.

Submit to the EO an official report on ballot boxes which were not returned to him by the BEI immediately after its adjournment. The ERSD shall be furnished with a copy of said report.

The Provincial, City and Municipal Treasurers are hereby designated for the purpose herein provided as Deputies under the direct and immediate supervision of the Commission in their respective provinces, cities and municipalities.

3. THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Department of Transportation and Communications, and its Department Secretary and all agencies/offices under the department are hereby designated as deputies to perform the following duties and functions:

a) Circularize to all owners and operators of land and air transportation facilities and telecommunications services, holders of certificates of public convenience, franchises or other forms of authorization, that the following acts are election offenses under the Omnibus Election Code:
    1) Sec. 89 which prohibits any candidate, political party or organization or any person from giving or accepting transportation, free of charge, directly or indirectly during the five (5) hours before and after a public meeting, on the day preceding the election and on election day;
    2) Sec. 95 which prohibits contributions for partisan political activity given directly or indirectly by natural or juridical persons operating a public utility; or by natural or juridical persons who held contracts or subcontracts to supply the government or any of its agencies, subdivisions or instrumentalities with goods or services or to perform construction or other work; or by natural or juridical persons who have been granted franchise, incentives, exemptions, allocations or similar privileges or concessions by the government or any of its agencies, subdivisions or instrumentalities including government-owned or controlled corporations; or by natural or juridical persons who within one year prior to the date of the election have been granted loans or other accommodations in excess of P100,000.00 by the government or any of its agencies, subdivisions or instrumentalities including government-owned or controlled corporations;
    3) Sec. 97 which makes it unlawful for any person or organization, whether civic or religious, to directly or indirectly solicit and/or accept from any candidate for public office or from his campaign manager, agent or representative, or any person acting in their behalf, any gift, food, transportations, contribution or donation in cash or in kind from the commencement of the election period up to and including election day;
    4) Sec. 261 (c) which prohibits the use under any guise whatsoever, directly or indirectly of any printing press, radio or television station or audio-visual equipment operated by the government or by its subdivisions, agencies or instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations, or any equipment, facility, apparatus, paraphernalia or vehicle owned by the government or by its political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations or by the Armed Forces of the Philippines for any election campaign or for any partisan political activity; and
    5) Sec. 261 (dd) (4) which penalizes any operator or employee of a public utility or transportation company operating under a certificate of public convenience who refuses to carry official election mail matters free of charge during the election period.
b) Direct its agents to apprehend violators of the aforesaid provisions of the Omnibus Election Code and refer such violations to the Commission;
c) Require all transportation companies engaged in the operation of transportation facilities to report within thirty (30) days following the day of the election, the use, rental or hiring of their facilities by any candidate, political party, coalition of political parties, or groups/organizations in connection with the election campaign, including the amount paid for such use, rental or hiring, which report shall be submitted to the Regional Election Director, who in turn shall submit the same to the ERSD for the purpose of proper accounting and monitoring of expenses under Secs. 100 and 101, respectively, in relation to Sec. 112 of the Omnibus Election Code; and
d) Perform such other duties and functions which the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

4. THE PHILIPPINES POSTAL SERVICES CORPORATION, THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, AND THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Philippine Postal Services Corporation and the Postmaster General, the National Telecommunications Commission and the Commissioner, and the Telecommunications Office and its Director are hereby designated as deputies to perform the following functions and duties:

a) Instruct their respective personnel and the management of all private telecommunications firms to give special preference to, and effect immediate transmission and delivery of messages or telegrams of the Commission, its field personnel and its deputies during the election period; and between and among the Commission's field offices, its deputies and other assisting agencies until after the proclamation of the winning candidates in the May 10, 2004 National and Local Elections;
b) Impress upon such personnel and management that non-compliance with the provisions of Sec. 9 of the Omnibus Election Code on preferential transmission of official mails, messages and telegrams relative to the elections, constitutes an election offense punishable under Sec . 264 of said Code with imprisonment of not less than one year but not more than six years and shall not be subject to probation. In addition, the guilty party shall be sentenced to suffer disqualification to hold public office and deprivation of the right of suffrage;
c) Assign sufficient number of personnel to receive, transmit and deliver election messages ten days before and on election day and ten days after election day;
d) Make operational all its stations during the election period; and
e) Perform such other duties and functions which the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

5. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

The Department of Energy and its Secretary and other agencies under it, and electric cooperatives in the local government units are hereby designated as deputies to perform the following:

a) To provide uninterrupted power supply on the day before and on election day, until the termination/conclusion of the canvassing of the election returns and proclamation of the elected officials; and
b) To perform such other functions that the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

6. THE PHILIPPINE AIR LINES (PAL)

The Philipine Air Lines and its President are hereby designated as deputies to perform the following functions and duties:

a) Direct the officials and employees of PAL throughout the country to give preferential accommodation of "must-ride status" to officials, employees and deputies of the Commission traveling on official business;
b) Direct said officials and employees of the Airlines to effect immediate shipment, delivery and transmittal of COMELEC cargo and other election matters; and
c) Perform such other duties and functions which the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

7. THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

The Civil Service Commission, and its chairman and officials are designated as deputies to enforce and implement the provision of the Constitution of the Philippines particularly paragraph 4, Section 2, B, Article IX, which provides that:

> "(4) No officer or employee in the civil service shall engage, directly or indirectly, in any electioneering or partisan political campaign."

and the provision of the Omnibus Election Code (BP 881), particularly Section 261:

> "Section 261. Prohibited Acts. – The following shall be guilty of an election offense:
>
> x x x x x x x x x
>
> f) Appointment of new employees, creation of new position, promotion, or giving salary increases. During the forty-five (45) days before a regular election; and thirty days before a special elections; (1) any head, official or appointing officer of a government office, agency or instrumentality, whether national or local, including government-owned or controlled corporations, who appoints or hires any new employee, whether provisional, temporary or casual, or creates and fills any new position, except upon prior authority of the Commission. The Commission shall not grant the authority sought unless, it is satisfied that the position to be filled is essential to the proper functioning of the office or agency concerned, and that the position shall not be filled in a manner that may influence the election.
>
> As an exemption to the foregoing provision, a new employee may be appointed in case of urgent need: Provided, however, That notice of the appointment shall be given to the Commission within three days from the date of the appointment. Any appointment or hiring in violation of this provision shall be null and void.
>
> (2) Any government official who promotes, or gives any increase of salary or remuneration or privilege to any government official or employee, including those in government-owned or controlled corporation.
>
> g) Transfer of officers and employees in the civil service. – Any official who makes or causes transfer or detail of any officer or employee in the civil service including public school teachers, within the election period except upon prior approval of the Commission.
>
> h) Intervention of public officers and employees. – Any officer or employee in the civil service, except those holdings political offices; any officer, employee, or member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or any police force, special forces, home defense forces, barangay self-defense units and all other paramilitary units that now exist or which may hereafter be organized who directly or indirectly, intervenes in any political activity, except to vote or to preserve public order, if he is a peace officer."
>
> x x x x x x x x x

and other related provisions of law on the matter.

8. COMMISSION ON AUDIT

The Commission on Audit, its Chairman and officials are designated as deputies and as such, they shall enforce and implement the provisions of Section 3 of Republic Act No. 6679, in relation to the provisions of Sec. 261 (v) and (w), of the Omnibus Election Code, quoted as follows:

> "Sec. 3. The construction or maintenance of provincial, city and barangay-funded roads and bridges shall be prohibited for a period of ten (10) days immediately preceding the date of election, the provisions of Section 261 paragraphs (v) and (w) of the Omnibus Election Code to the contrary notwithstanding."

9. DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT

The Department of Budget and Management, its Secretary and Officials are designated as deputies and as such they shall enforce and implement the provisions of Sec. 3 of Republic Act No. 6697, quoted above, in relation to Sec. 261, paragraphs (v) and (w) of the Omnibus Election Code, specifically on the prohibition against release/expenditures and disbursement of public funds.

10. PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

The Philippine Information Agency, its Director and officials are designated as deputies and as such shall perform the following duties:

1. Assist the Commission in its education and information campaign on the aforesaid elections;
2. Make available to the Commission the services of and its personnel, as may be necessary to ensure implementation of the programs of activities or operation plans for the Commission's information campaign;
3. Produce such information materials as the Commission may deem necessary to ensure the conduct of free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible national and local elections on May 10, 2004; Provided, that in all cases:
    a) The Agency shall adhere strictly to the policy of the Commission that the education and information campaign must be absolutely impartial, objective and neutral;
    b) The expenses it may incur, as such deputy for the information campaign of the Commission, i.e., production of information materials, shall be for the exclusive account of the Agency; and
    c) Any information material which the Agency, as such deputy, shall produce upon the direction of the Commission, shall be published/distributed/released only upon prior clearance from the Commission to ensure that nothing therein contained shall detract from or violate the policy of impartiality, objectivity and neutrality.
4. Perform such other duties and functions which the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

EFFECTIVITY

This resolution shall take effect seven (7) days following its publication in at least two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

DISSEMINATION

The Executive Director shall furnish all the above deputized officials and/or departments, offices, or agencies, through their respective heads, copies of this resolution pertinent to their agencies.

The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this resolution in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and disseminate this resolution for the information of the public.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

LUZVIMINDA G. TANCANGCO
Commissioner

RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
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(PDI – January 4, 2004)

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LAS PINAS

3BR 2TB BF 10yrs 2 pay 8472626

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MANILA

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Antipolo 2br2tb grge P1.150T
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QUEZON CITY

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

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TOWN & COUNTRY LA 180m² P2,900/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

CAVITE

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DON BOSCO EXEC HTS LA128m² P2,900/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

ST. CHARBEL DASMA LA371m² P2,650/m² Vic8903461 loc27

LAGUNA

• Paclia 5yrs 2 pay 8472626

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COMM'L/RESDL

RIZAL

BIRMINGHAM
Place2/Homes/Sunrise
H&L/Lot/Twnhse
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LOGISTICS MANAGER	At least 34 yrs. old	M	College graduate. Post graduate course is an advantage. With 5 years managerial experiences & exposure in the field of delivery & other logistic functions. Excellent in team building. Good moral character, honest, willing to work long hours. Dedicated and have sense of commitment.
GENERAL AFFAIRS MANAGER	At least 34 yrs. old	F	College graduate. Post graduate course is an advantage. With 5 years managerial experiences & exposure in the field of personnel administration, human resources and general affairs. Excellent in team building. Good moral character, honest, willing to work long hours. Dedicated and have sense of commitment to handle pressure.
PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR	At least 25 yrs. old	M/F	College graduate. Good moral character, honest, dependable, hardworking. With 3 yrs. experience & exposure in the manufacturing set-up as supervisor. Willing to work long hours and shifting. Dedicated and have sense of commitment.
COMPANY NURSE	20-28 yrs. old	F	Graduate of B.S. Nursing w/ at least 1-year work experience in the same field. Exposure in General Affairs is a great advantage. Experience in safety program is a plus. Willing to work long hours, good communication skills & good reporting ability.
PROCESS ENGINEER	19-25 yrs. old	M	College graduate, preferably Engineering. Good moral character, cooperative, dependable, hardworking and willing to work long hours, shifting. Preferably with exposure in corrugated materials, operans. Highly technical and analytical person who can work independently
GENERAL AFFAIRS STAFF	22-28 yrs. old	F	College graduate. With relevant experience and exposure in the field of personnel administration, human resources and general affairs. Computer literate, good communication skills. Good moral character, honest, willing to work long hours. Dedicated and have sense of commitment.
TECHNICIAN	20-27 yrs. old	M	At least college level. Honest, willing to work long hours and in shifting. Can handle work pressure. With relevant exposure and experience in the same field as technician or assistant technician

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ETHELWALDO ZARCO BAUTISTA was settled by his sole heir through an Affidavit of Adjudication. As Per Doc No.385; Page No.78, Book No. 01; Series of 2003. Notary Public Ma. Amparo H. Villamor for Makati City.
(PDI-Dec.28, 2003 Jan. 4 &11, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Ana Sarmiento and Faustino Pedro, Parcel of lands located in Pasong Tamo, Quezon City, particularly described in TCT No. 5360 of Lot 777-B of the Piedad estate and TCT No. 19491 of Lot 713-C also of the Piedad estate has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc 427 Page 66 Book 17 Series 2002 before Notary Public Atty Hector B. Centeno, QC
(PDI Dec 21 28 2003 & Jan 4 2004)

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Maria Clara Lobregat y Lorenzo

Mayor of Zamboanga City

Died in the Grace of Our Lord on January 2, 2004,
at the age of 82.

Widow of **Celso Lobregat.** Her children **Concepcion** and **Ramon Balaguer, Celso** and **Nona, Maria Luisa (†), Pablo** and **Ma. Angela, Jose** and **Cristina, Lourdes, Jerome** and **Ma. Cristina;** her brothers and sisters **Isabel (†), Pablo** and **Milagros, Maria Luisa (†), Luis (†)** and **Alicia;** her sisters-in-law **Rosario L. Legarda** and **Carmen L. Menendez;** nephews, nieces and other family members request your prayers for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her body will be flown to Zamboanga City on Sunday, January 4, 2004 where she will lie in state at the Cathedral until January 7, after which she will be flown back to Manila where she will lie in state at the Santuario de San Antonio.

Details of the funeral Mass and the interment at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque will be announced later.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

BRIG. GEN. JONAS A. VICTORIA, AFP (Ret.)

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 5, 2003

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, gave donations, kept vigil and attended the necrological services and funeral rites, and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Ade
Lee, Hellen and Lillibeth
Jia, Naggi and Denise

ALFONSO MA. H. CARREON

Retired Senior Dentist of the U.P. Health Service
peacefully joined our Lord on January 2, 2004
at the age of 94.

His wife **Corazon(+);** children **Vic, Flor & Dick, Tessie & Cesar, Mila & Henson, Beth & Jun,** and **Dona & Kevin** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Church (Claret) UP Village, QC.

Funeral Mass will be on Wednesday, January 7, at 8:00AM. Interment will follow at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Dr. E. Arsenio Manuel

(Husband of the late Magdalena Avenir Manuel)

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 27, 2003 at the age of 94.

His loving children **Arsenio, Aurora, Cesar, Corazon, Amor** and **Ricardo;** grandchildren **Eleanor, Sonny, Gerard, Joy, Jojo, Jay, Kiel, Nicky, Sheryl, Carl, Ivan, Jing, Bing, Boyet, Benjie** and **Miko;** sister **Rosita Lobrin;** brothers **Anacleto** and **Lucio;** in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at **Claret Chapel, UP Village, Quezon City** until January 4, 2004; UP Chapel from January 5 to 6, 2004.

Interment will be on Wednesday, January 7, 2004; 11:00 a.m. at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

MONINA C. CARDIÑO

Died peacefully on January 3, 2004 at the age of 68.

Her loving husband **Jaime;** children **Glenda, Boyet** and **Jeannette; Bernadette, Jun** and **Myra, Francis** and **Aymee;** grandchildren **Mico, Butchokoy, Paolo, Moline, Monique, Jaymee** and **Erin;** and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz at Araneta Avenue, Quezon City and will be cremated on January 7, 2004.

ALAN PALMA

Peacefully joined our Lord
on December 19, 2003.

His remains lie in state at DON BOSCO CHAPEL at Pasay Road, Makati City.

Interment will be on January 6, 2004, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Don Bosco Hope Chapel.

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him. *I Corinthians 2:9*

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Maria Clara Lobregat y Lorenzo

Alcaldesa de la Ciudad de Zamboanga

Ha fallecido cristianamente en Manila, el dia 2 de Enero de 2004,
a la edad de 82 años.

Viuda de **Celso Lobregat**. Sus hijos **Concepción** y **Ramón Balaguer**, **Celso** y **Nona**, **Maria Luisa** (+), **Pablo** y **Ma. Angela**, **Jose** y **Cristina**, **Lourdes**, **Jerome** y **Ma. Cristina**; hermanos **Isabel** (+), **Pablo** y **Milagros**, **Maria Luisa** (+), **Luis** (+) y **Alicia**; cuñadas **Rosario L. Legarda** y **Carmen L. Menendez**; sobrinos y demas parientes lo hacen saber a sus amigos, rogandoles un recuerdo en sus oraciones.

Se hallará en cuerpo presente en la ciudad de Zamboanga en la Catedral de la ciudad desde el Domingo 4 Enero de 2004 hasta el 7 de Enero, diá en el que se hallará en cuerpo presente en Manila en el Santuario de San Antonio.

Detalles de la ceremonia religiosa por el eterno descanso de su alma y del entierro en Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque se anunciarán más adelante.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." -- John 3:16

HILARIO GUTIERREZ PINEDA, SR.

of Concepcion, Tarlac

January 14, 1916 - January 2, 2004

His wife **Candida**; children **Carlos & Tillie**, **Fely & Danny**, **Lourdes & Art**, **Crisostomo** (†) **& Linda**, **Leopoldo** (†), **Florante & Fely**, **Hilario Jr. & Ligaya**, **Yolanda & Jaime**, **Victoria**, **Erlinda & Vic**, **Julieta**, **Archie & Cathy**; grandchildren & great grandchildren, 2 surviving sisters **Leonora & Dolores** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at Sapang Maragul, Tarlac City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 6, 2004, 9:00 a.m. at Garden of Ascencion Memorial Park, Tarlac City.

Our Dearly Beloved

GABRIEL "GABBY" OCAMPO YUCHING

March 24, 1938 – December 30, 2003

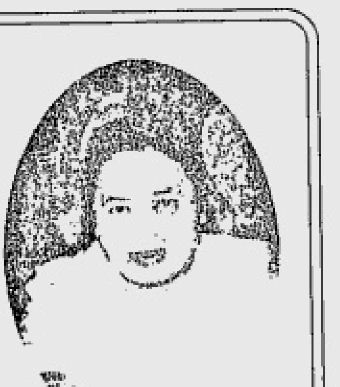
Peacefully Joined our Lord

He is survived by his wife, **Mariette**
Children: **Micki & Ramil**, **Geof & Jean** and **Mia**
Grandchildren: **Meg**, **RG**, **Jamie**, **Matthew** and **Janine**
Sisters: **Mila**, **Tita**, **Remy** and **Baby**

His body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels,
Sucat, Parañaque City.

Cremation will be on 06 January 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park
Crematorium, Sucat, Parañaque City
after the 9:00 AM Mass at the Loyola Memorial Chapels.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down the green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."
Psalm 23:12



CARLOS "BOY" TANCINCO YAMBAO, JR.

Peacefully joined the Lord on January 2, 2004
at the age of 54.

His loving family **JO, JAY & MIKEY, TEMBONG, SAM & NICO, PEEJAY, NIKKI, MARILYN, ROLLY** (†), **ED & CECILE, RUBEN & LINA, MARLOU**; nieces & nephews, and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Mt. Carmel Church, New Manila.

Interment will be on January 6, 2004 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina, after the 1:00 p.m. Holy Mass at Mt. Carmel.

Our Dearly Beloved Mama

RAFAELA PAL ALTRES

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 2, 2004

Her husband **Ninoy**, children **Elsie & Nards**, **Michael** (+) **& Myra**, **Emy & Jojo**, **Felina** (+), **Maita & Owe**, **Jun & Tina**, **Cathy & Abba**, **Bim-bim**; and grandchildren **LJ**, **J-Boy**, **King**, **Luke**, **Marc**, **Nixi**, **Xen**, **Rem**, **Khristian**, **Christopher**, **Chrisdale** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial, St. Elizabeth Chapel, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 6 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque.

ALEJANDRA RODRIGUEZ MALAYA, MD

UST Medicine Class 1953

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 2, 2004 at the age of 77.

Her beloved husband **Dr. Eli Sr.** (†); son **Dr. Eli Jr.** and **Jean**; grandchildren **Trixie**, **Janelle**, **Noel**, **Kevin** and **Justin**; sisters **Paz Rodriguez** (†), **Demetria R. Lazaga** (†), **Victoria R. Vidal**, **Azucena R. Beredo**, **Lolita R. Tabamo**; brother **Alfonso Rodriguez Sr.** (†), relatives and friends request the pious readers for prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Immaculate Concepcion Church, Sta. Cruz, Laguna until the morning of January 5, 2004. She will then be transferred to Calamba Memorial Chapels, Calamba City, Laguna.

Interment will be at Rizal Memorial Park, Calamba City, Laguna on Tuesday, January 6, 2004 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at St. John the Baptist.

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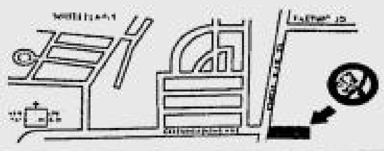

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Thursdays will see a repeat of the Bedroom Boys (Jan. 8) and Acoustic Jive (Jan. 15 and 29).

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Happy hour music on all Thursdays to Saturdays of January will spotlight acoustic artist Mae Romero.

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TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY	
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ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
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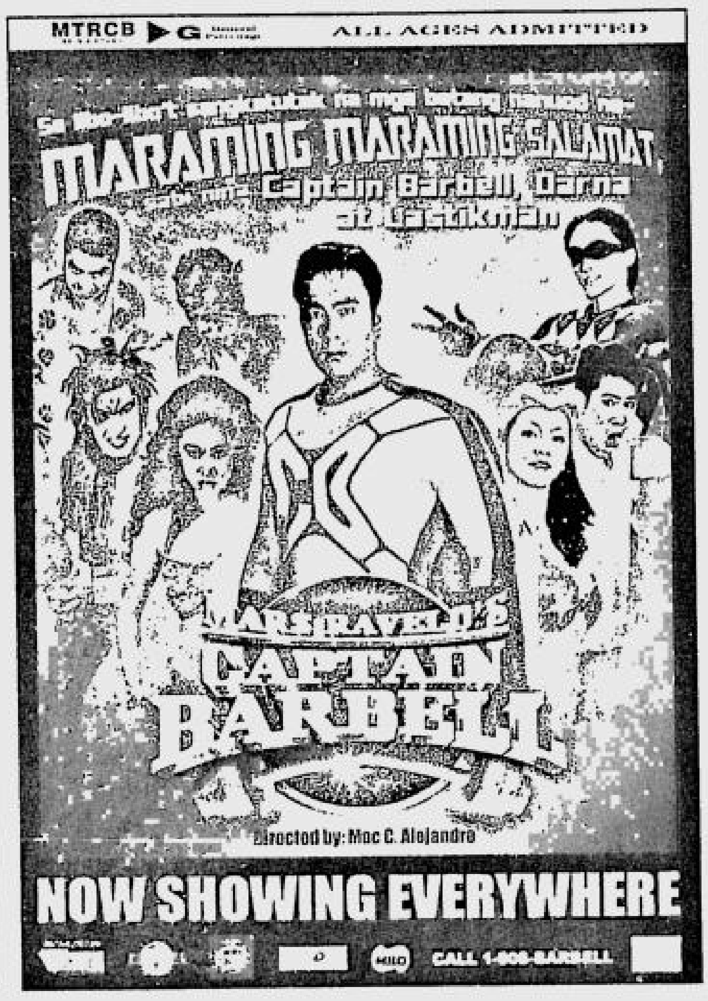
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Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 CAPT. BARBEL
2 GAGAMBOY

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
1 MANO PO-2
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 CAPT. BARBEL
4 CRYING LADIES
5 MALIKMATA
6 GAGAMBOY
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8
9

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 FANTASTIC MAN
2 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
3 MANO PO-2
4 CAPT BARBEL

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 MANO PO-2

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 MANO PO-2
2 CAPT BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 MANO PO-2
2 CAPT BARBEL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 MALIKMATA
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 MANO PO-2

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 CAPT BARBEL
2 CRYING LADIES
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771
1 GAGAMBOY
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 CRYING LADIES
2 GAGAMBOY
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel)
1 CRYING LADIES
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 GAGAMBOY

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 MALIKMATA
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 GAGAMBOY
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 CAPT BARBEL
2 CRYING LADIES
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY
5 FANTASTIC MAN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 MALIKMATA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 CAPT BARBEL
2 GAGAMBOY
3 FANTASTIC MAN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 GAGAMBOY

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 CAPT BARBEL

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 CAPT. BARBEL
2 MALIKMATA
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 MANO PO-2

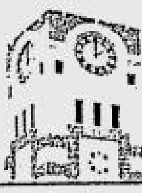
Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 GAGAMBOY

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

OPENING IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
EASTWOOD CINEMAS
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE!

- The Philippines' first Rocker Seats with retractable armrest
- Stadium seating for unobstructed viewing
- Automated Box Offices for easy ticket purchasing
- 4 Dolby Digital EX cinema for the best in cinematic sound environment



SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295412

1	MANO PO 2
2	BRIDAL SHOWER
3	FANTASTIC MAN
4	CAPTAIN BARBELL
5	MALIKMATA
6	CRYING LADIES
7	GAGAMBOY
8	FILIPINAS

SM CITY CEBU
2310076

1	CRYING LADIES
2	FANTASTIC MAN
3	GAGAMBOY
4	FILIPINAS
5	BRIDAL SHOWER
6	MANO PO 2
7	MALIKMATA
8	CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY BACOOR
4173060

1	FILIPINAS
2	MANO PO 2
3	FANTASTIC MAN
4	BRIDAL SHOWER
5	CAPTAIN BARBELL
6	GAGAMBOY
7	MALIKMATA
8	CRYING LADIES

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7120115

1	FANTASTIC MAN
2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
3	BRIDAL SHOWER
4	GAGAMBOY
5	MALIKMATA
6	CRYING LADIES

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294375

1	CRYING LADIES
2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
3	BRIDAL SHOWER
4	FILIPINAS

SM BICUTAN
7763055

1	GAGAMBOY
2	MALIKMATA
3	MANO PO 2
4	CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MARILAO

1	MALIKMATA
2	FANTASTIC MAN
3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
4	GAGAMBOY

SM STA. MESA
7149522 • 7149416

1	MANO PO 2
2	MALIKMATA
3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
4	BRIDAL SHOWER
5	FANTASTIC MAN
6	GAGAMBOY
7	CRYING LADIES
8	BRIDAL SHOWER
9	GAGAMBOY
10	FILIPINAS

SM SOUTHMALL
8058888

1	BRIDAL SHOWER
2	FILIPINAS
3	CRYING LADIES
4	CAPTAIN BARBELL
5	GAGAMBOY
6	BNDAL SHOWER
7	MALIKMATA
8	FANTASTIC MAN
9	GAGAMBOY
10	MANO PO 2

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9359743

1	FANTASTIC MAN
2	GAGAMBOY
3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
4	BRIDAL SHOWER
5	CAPTAIN BARBELL
6	FANTASTIC MAN
7	MANO PO 2
8	CRYING LADIES
9	GAGAMBOY
10	MALIKMAFA
11	BRIDAL SHOWER
12	FILIPINAS

SM CITY DAVAO
2974332

1	MANO PO 2
2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
3	FANTASTIC MAN
4	FILIPINAS
5	BRIDAL SHOWER
6	CRYING LADIES

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7100977-80

1	CAPTAIN BARBELL
2	CRYING LADIES
3	MANO PO 2
4	GAGAMBOY

SM MEGAMALL
6334991 • 6339401

1	MANO PO 2 RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6355999
2	CRYING LADIES
3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
4	MANO PO 2
5	BRIDAL SHOWER
6	GAGAMBOY
7	BRIDAL SHOWER
8	CRYING LADIES
9	MALIKMATA
10	FANTASTIC MAN
11	GAGAMBOY
12	FILIPINAS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	CAPTAIN BARBELL
2	CRYING LADIES
3	FANTASTIC MAN
4	BRIDAL SHOWER

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	MALIKMATA
2	RESERVED
3	BRIDAL SHOWER
4	GAGAMBOY
5	CRYING LADIES
6	MANO PO 2
7	RESERVED
8	CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	BRIDAL SHOWER
2	FANTASTIC MAN
3	MANO PO 2
4	GAGAMBOY
5	MALIKMATA
6	CRYING LADIES
7	BRIDAL SHOWER
8	FILIPINAS
9	CAPTAIN BARBELL
10	CRYING LADIES
11	GAGAMBOY
12	MALIKMATA

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592664

1	BRIDAL SHOWER
2	CRYING LADIES
3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
4	MANO PO 2

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4424505

1	MANO PO 2
2	MALIKMATA
3	CRYING LADIES
4	GAGAMBOY

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City • 636 9781 - 85

1	CRYING LADIES 10:15 FS/10:35 MF/1:00/3:25/5:50/8:15/10:10 LFS/10:40 LMF/12:35 END
2	MANO PO 2 11:10 FS/11:40 MF/2:25/5:10/7:55/10:10 LFS/10:40 LMF/12:55 END

For Seat Reservation call 633 8975 • LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

Matinee · P100.00 - Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday • Regular P120.00 - After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS
@ Robinsons Malls

TOP MOVIE THEATER
Annual National
Consumer's Quality Award 2003

NOW SHOWING

DIAL-A-MOVIE FOR ALL BRANCHES 635-5555

Galleria
632- 9115- 16
687-0593

THX /All Digital

1 CRYING LADIES 11:10, 1:45, 4:20, 6:55, 9:30 THX	4 FANTASTIC MAN 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
2 MANO PO 2 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50	5 BRIDAL SHOWER 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50	6 GAGAMBOY 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
7 HOMECOMING 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00	9 FILIPINAS 12:40, 3 00, 5 20, 7.40, 10 00
8 MALIKMATA 12 30, 2.45, 5 00, 7.15, 9:30	10 CRYING LADIES 2 15, 4 50, 7.25, 10 00

MATINEE PRICE: P100 THX cinema / P75 1level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita
526-7185
536-7809 to 12

1 MANO PO 2 - 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00
2 FANTASTIC MAN - 10.10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
3 FILIPINAS - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10.00
4 BRIDAL SHOWER - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
5 CAPTAIN BARBEL - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
6 GAGAMBOY - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
7 CRYING LADIES - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00

Metro East
Marcos hway
682-8193/99
682-8280

1	MALIKMATA
2	BRIDAL SHOWER
3	MANO PO 2
4	FILIPINAS
5	CRYING LADIES
6	CAPTAIN BARBELL
7	FANTASTIC MAN
8	GAGAMBOY

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1	FANTASTIC MAN
2	FILIPINAS
3	MALIKMATA
4	CRYING LADIES
5	CAPTAIN BARBELL
6	MANO PO 2
7	BRIDAL SHOWER
8	GAGAMBOY

Cainta
Brgy. Sto. Domingo Ortigas Extension

1	BRIDAL SHOWER
2	CRYING LADIES
3	GAGAMBOY
4	FANTASTIC MAN

Malabon
288-0965/2575

1	CRYING LADIES
2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
3	GAGAMBOY
4	BRIDAL SHOWER

Sta. Rosa / Lipa, Batangas
(049)837-0907 · (043)757-3604-312-5870

Sta. Rosa		Lipa, Batangas
FANTASTIC MAN	1	MANO PO 2
FILIPINAS	2	FILIPINAS
MALIKMATA	3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
GAGAMBOY	4	MALIKMATA
CAPTAIN BARBELL	5	CRYING LADIES

Dasmariñas / Imus
(046)471-8188 / 875-5858

Dasmariñas		Imus
GAGAMBOY	1	FANTASTIC MAN
CRYING LADIES	2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
FANTASTIC MAN	3	CRYING LADIES
CAPTAIN BARBELL	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
MALIKMATA	5	FILIPINAS
	6	GAGAMBOY

Bacolod / Iloilo
(034)441-0458/59 · (033)336-8070 to 78

Bacolod		Iloilo
MANO PO 2	1	MANO PO 2
FILIPINAS	2	FILIPINAS
GAGAMBOY	3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
CRYING LADIES	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
MALIKMATA	5	GAGAMBOY
ELF	6	CRYING LADIES

Star Mills
San Fernando Pampanga
(045)875-1927
(045)961-5270

1	BRIDAL SHOWER
2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
3	FILIPINAS
4	GAGAMBOY
5	CRYING LADIES
6	MANO PO 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Well grounded
INQUIRER

MTRCB ▶ G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED

PEOPLE's CHOICE for Best Picture Award • 2003 MMFFP 2nd Best Picture Award
Best Original Story • Best Cinematography • Best Production Design • Best Float

Mano Po 2
MY HOME
NOW SHOWING NATIONWIDE
A Regal Entertainment Inc., An official entry to 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE WWW.MANOPO2.COM
DOLBY

FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNER !!!
BEST VISUAL EFFECTS • BEST EDITING
BEST SOUND • BEST MUSICAL SCORE

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Parents Guidance 13 (Children below thirteen (13) years of age shall be allowed only if accompanied by a parent or an adult)

This movie contains scary scenes that may not be suitable for very young viewers. parental guidance is proposed

MARVIN AGUSTIN
DINGDONG DANTES
RICKY DAVAO
WOWIE DE GUZMAN
ANNA CAPRI
NIKKI VALDEZ
AND
MS. BARBARA PEREZ
RICA PERALEJO
MALIKMATA
HANDA KA NA BANG MATAKOT?
DIRECTED BY JOSE JAVIER REYES dgpi
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2003
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM OCTOARTS - ORBIT MUSIC
CANARY FILMS PRESENTATION
DOLBY
Distributed by: OctoArts FILMS
NOW SHOWING

CONGRATULATIONS BOSSING, ANG NO. 1
FANTASTIC SUPERHERO NG BAYAN

MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED

ARA MINA
MICHAEL V.
ZOREN LEGASPI
LEO MARTINEZ
DANICA SOTTO
INTRODUCING
ALICIA MAYER
VIC SOTTO
FANTASTIC MAN
DIRECTED BY TONY Y. REYES, DGPI
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2003
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM OCTOARTS - ORBIT MUSIC
NOW SHOWING !

Gary V at Aliw Theater

SHOW TIME

STAR City and Manila Broadcasting Co. welcome the New Year with an electrifying performance by "Mr. Pure Energy" Gary Valenciano on Jan. 9 at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex, Manila.

This concert marks another milestone for the performer, who had his first solo concert "Gary V: A-Live" at the Araneta Coliseum 20 years ago in April 1984.

Gary also staged his first international concert in Singapore later that same year.

Performing at the Aliw Theater for the third time since 2002, Gary V has consistently proven his drawing power before a jam packed audience.

After over 200 awards and nominations, 21 albums, and countless local and international concerts, Gary V remains one of the hottest artists in entertainment history.

Among his records, five have hit double platinum, three have reached triple platinum and one even hit the quadruple platinum mark.

His longevity in the entertainment business can be attributed to his penchant for innovation.

In 1995, Gary V became the first Filipino artist to infuse contemporary music styles into a Christian album when he launched "Out of the Dark," which made waves locally, in Asia, and even the United States.

Riding the wave of technology, Gary V also launched a self-titled interactive CD which is the first of its kind in Asia. "Gary: Interactive" hit the gold sales mark in only a month.

Gary V is also a popular product endorser and an Ambassador of Goodwill for the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), taking up various advocacy issues as early as the '90s.

For tickets, contact TicketWorld at 891-5610, TicketNet at 911-5555 and Star City at 832-6121 and 22.

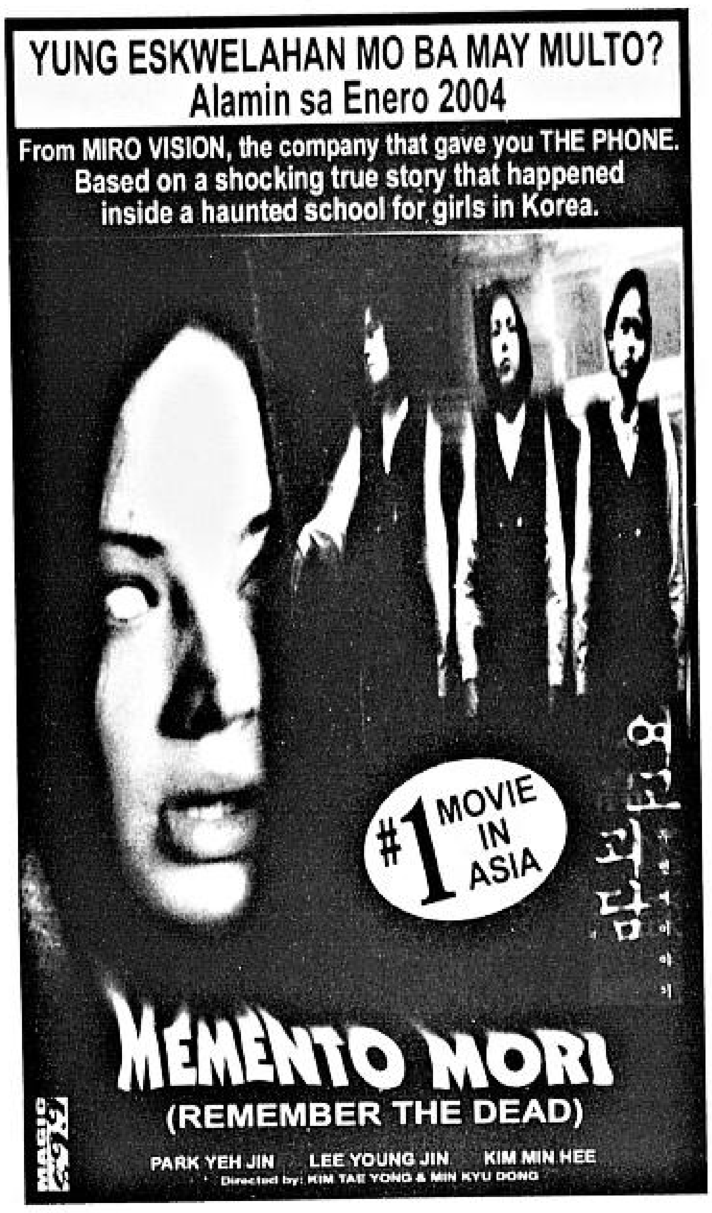
Maggi heats up gimmicks

BARKADA gimmicks will not be as sizzling if not spiced up by Maggi Savor Chili Garlic sauce. This was made clear in the recently held savory nights at the watering hole Dencio's in Quezon City, Makati and Alabang.

Maggi's hot chili girls spiced up the night and regular diners at Dencio's gamely took part in the games of charades and fiery factors. Others grooved to the funky techno beats provided by the house DJ.

Rosa Simba, group product manager of Maggi, said "the latest flavor of the brand is ideal for bar-chow dishes like *sisig, tokwat' baboy*, gambas and grilled seafood."

Maggi's Chili Garlic sauce is a sizzling blend of garlic and chili. Its rich spicy flavor eliminates the need to create ordinary sauces for bar food. "It's also perfect for spicing up picnics and informal parties for friends and family," Simba added.



YUNG ESKWELAHAN MO BA MAY MULTO?
Alamin sa Enero 2004

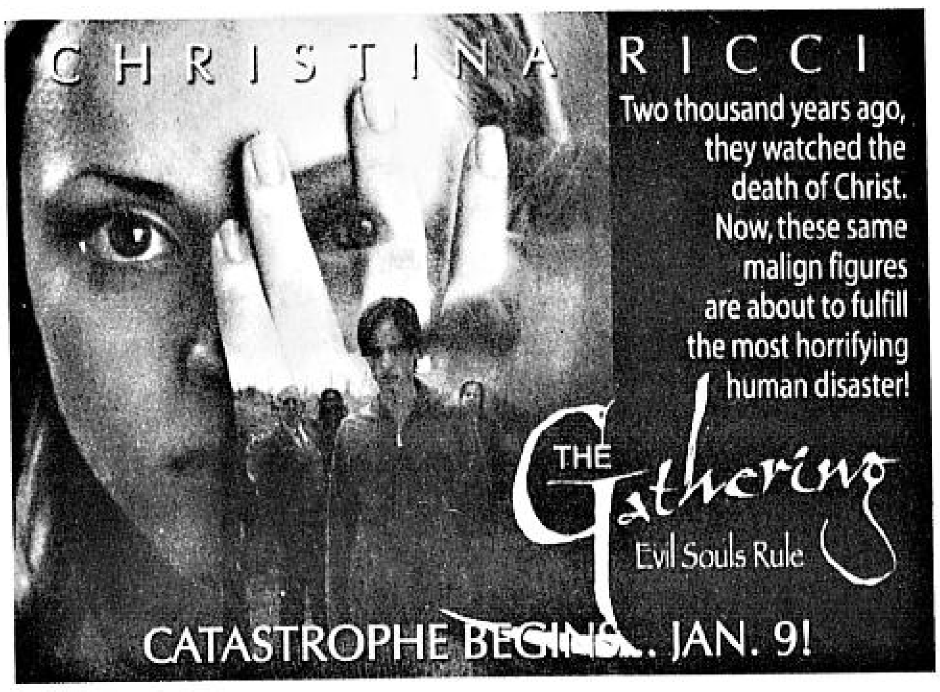
From MIRO VISION, the company that gave you THE PHONE. Based on a shocking true story that happened inside a haunted school for girls in Korea.

#1 MOVIE IN ASIA
MEMENTO MORI
(REMEMBER THE DEAD)
PARK YEH JIN
LEE YOUNG JIN
KIM MIN HEE
Directed by: KIM TAE YONG & MIN KYU DONG

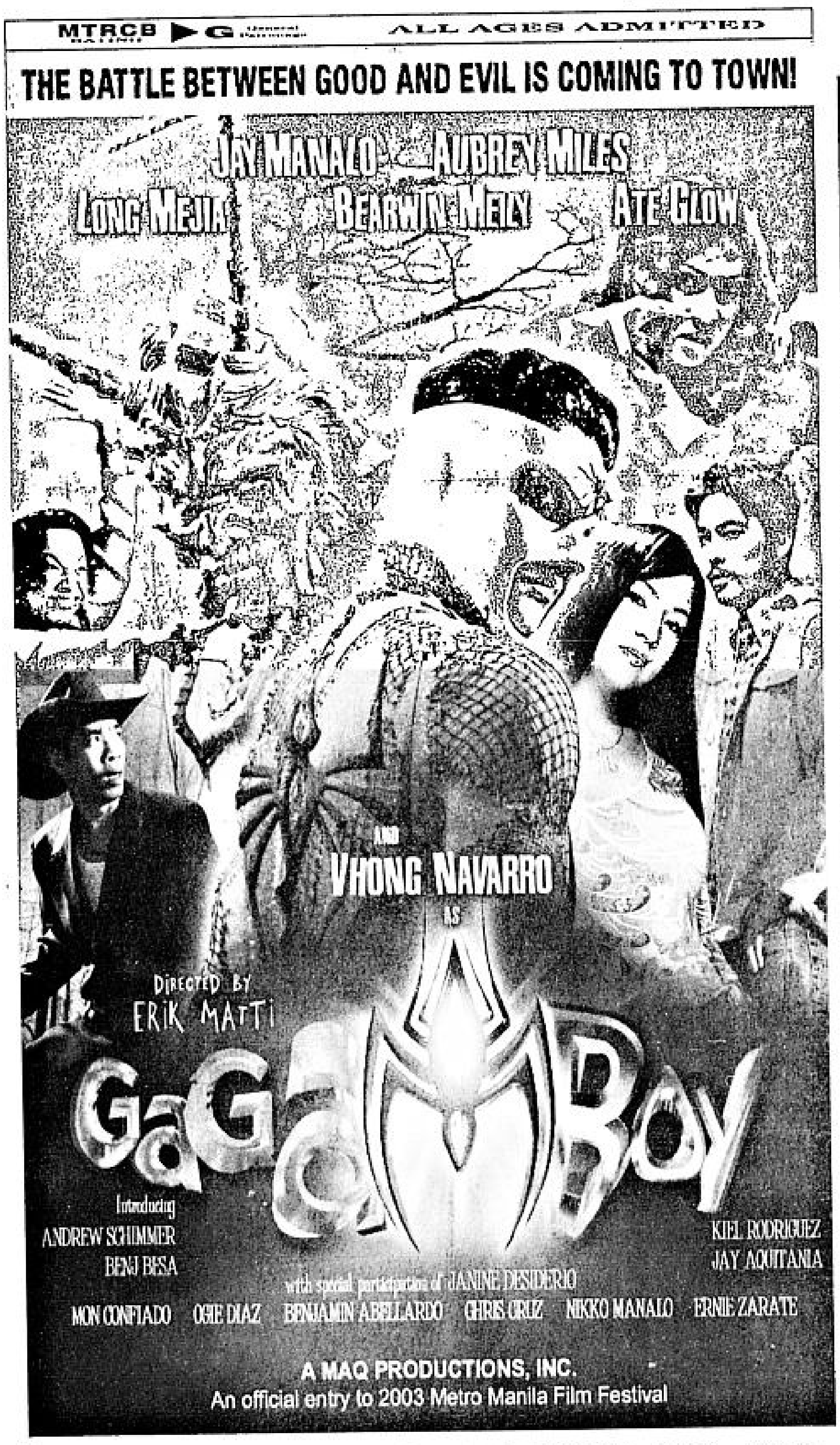
POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

BRIDAL SHOWER R13	GAGAMBOY GP	MANO PO 2 GP 11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:30, 10:30
CRYING LADIES PG13 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:20	MALIKMATA PG13 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	FILIPINAS GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

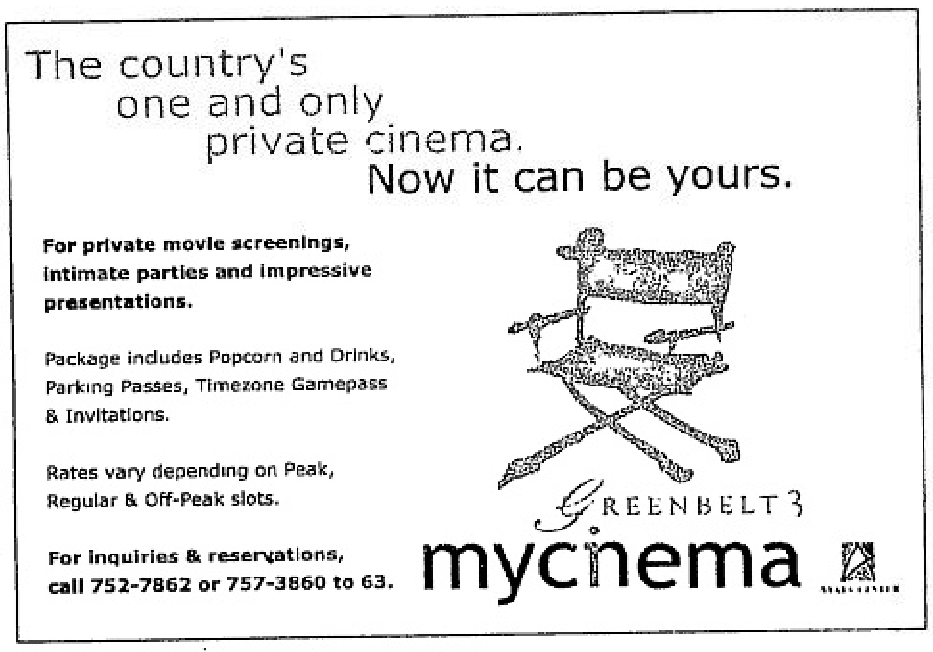


CHRISTINA RICCI
Two thousand years ago, they watched the death of Christ. Now, these same malign figures are about to fulfill the most horrifying human disaster!
THE Gathering
Evil Souls Rule
CATASTROPHE BEGINS... JAN. 9!



MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage
ALL AGES ADMITTED
THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IS COMING TO TOWN!
JAY MANALO
AUBREY MILES
LONG MEJIA
BEARWIN MEILY
ATE GLOW
AND
VHONG NAVARRO
AS
DIRECTED BY ERIK MATTI
GaGaMBoy
Introducing
ANDREW SCHIMMER
BENJ BESA
KIEL RODRIGUEZ
JAY AQUITANIA
with special participation of JANINE DESIDERIO
MON CONFIADO
OGIE DIAZ
BENJAMIN ABELLARDO
CHRIS CRUZ
NIKKO MANALO
ERNIE ZARATE
A MAQ PRODUCTIONS, INC.
An official entry to 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival
29th
NOW SHOWING
LOVE RADIO

The most awaited film of the New Year opens on Jan 9, 2004 in over 300 theaters nationwide.
10 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
BEST DIRECTOR-PETER JACKSON
ELIJAH WOOD
IAN McKELLEN
VIGGO MORTENSEN
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
THE RETURN OF THE KING



The country's
one and only
private cinema.
Now it can be yours.

For private movie screenings, intimate parties and impressive presentations.

Package includes Popcorn and Drinks, Parking Passes, Timezone Gamepass & Invitations.

Rates vary depending on Peak, Regular & Off-Peak slots.

For inquiries & reservations, call 752-7862 or 757-3860 to 63.

GREENBELT 3
mycinema

The Perfect Venue
Movie premieres the way it should be done...
The right way.

GREENBELT 1
Onstage
AYALA CENTER

At Onstage Greenbelt 1 with 800 luxurious seats, latest digital system, stadium seating, stylish lobby

Also available for other types of live presentation and entertainment.
For inquiries and reservations, call 752-7862 or 752-7877.

Someone's Gonna Win This Party!

3 TOP COOL PRIZES!

Party Bash - January 5, 2004

Invite 100 guests to a venue of your choice and party with the band you fancy! Prize worth ₱300,000!

Hongkong Trip & Shopping Spree - February 2, 2004

Enjoy a leisure trip for 5 to Hongkong plus pocket money. Prize worth ₱300,000!

Grand Prize - March 1, 2004

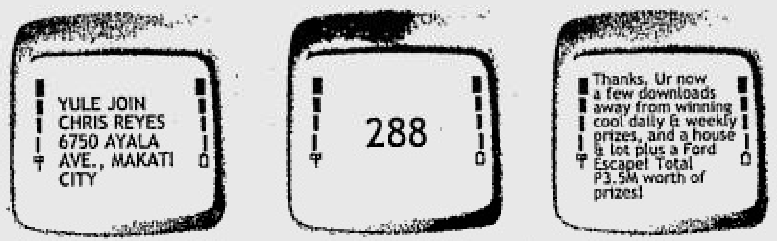
House and lot with new Ford Escape in the garage!

Cool daily and weekly prizes!

- Philips Real Flat TV
- Philips Camera
- Philips MP3 Player
- Philips Audio
- Philips DVD Player
- Dickies Bags
- Changhong Aircon
- M&M Dispensers

Over ₱3.5 million in cool, cool prizes!
Get a chance to win a house & lot with a new Ford Escape in the garage,
plus other cool prizes in the daily and weekly draws!

Simply download Smart zed services (ringtones, icons, MMX, graphics and tone-based services) and you're automatically qualified for the daily, weekly and top raffle draws.



YULE JOIN
CHRIS REYES
6750 AYALA
AVE., MAKATI
CITY

288

Thanks, Ur now a few downloads away from winning cool daily & weekly prizes, and a house & lot plus a Ford Escape! Total P3.5M worth of prizes!

Type YULE JOIN <name>/<address>

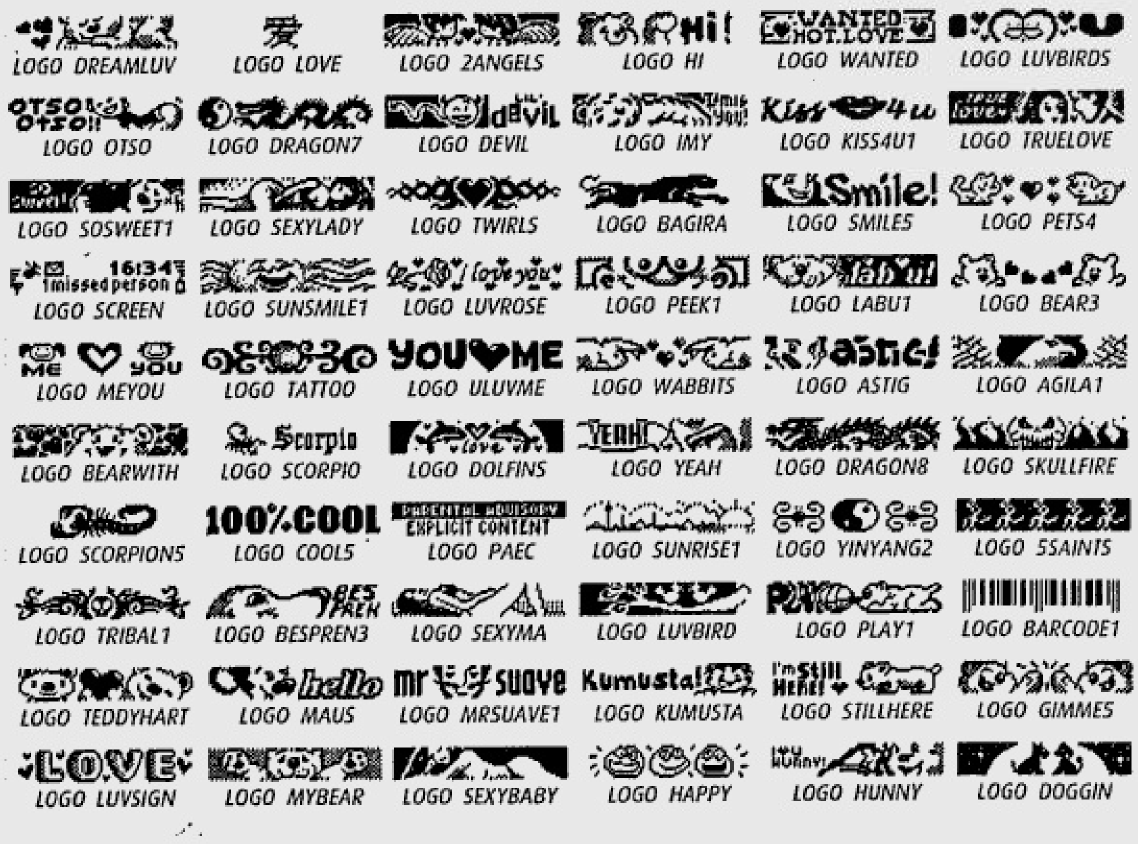
Send to 288.

A confirmation message will be sent to you.

zed™ YULE COOL B

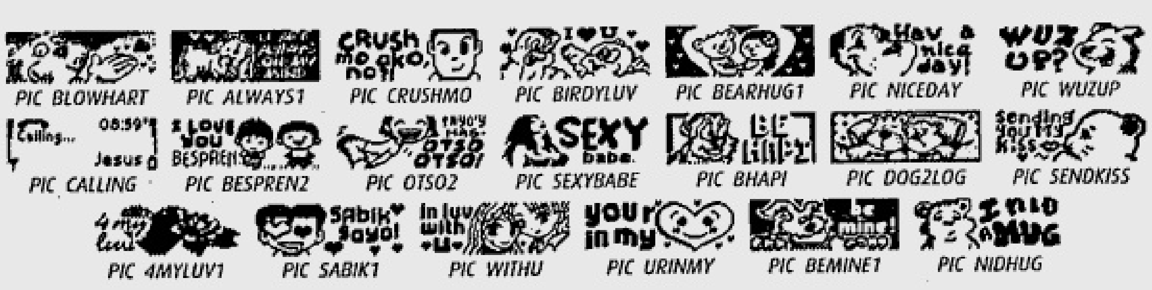
₱5.00 services 2 entries/delivery	₱10.00 services 4 entries/delivery	₱15.00 services 6 entries/delivery
Zed bread Fortune Cookie CALGUY CALGAL Comics Pop Star game Beerkada Say Grace MMX Horoscope	MMX POP Textpressions ₱30.00 service 12 entries/delivery Java Games	POW TONE POW LOGO POW PIC POW OPM POW ROCK POW POLY POW MMS

Operator Logos



LOGO DREAMLUV	LOGO LOVE	LOGO 2ANGELS	LOGO HI	LOGO WANTED	LOGO LUVBIRDS
LOGO OTSO	LOGO DRAGON7	LOGO DEVIL	LOGO IMY	LOGO KISS4U1	LOGO TRUELOVE
LOGO SOSWEET1	LOGO SEXYLADY	LOGO TWIRLS	LOGO BAGIRA	LOGO SMILES	LOGO PETS4
LOGO SCREEN	LOGO SUNSMILE1	LOGO LUVROSE	LOGO PEEK1	LOGO LABU1	LOGO BEAR3
LOGO MEYOU	LOGO TATTOO	LOGO ULUVME	LOGO WABBITS	LOGO ASTIG	LOGO AGILA1
LOGO BEARWITH	LOGO SCORPIO	LOGO DOLFINS	LOGO YEAH	LOGO DRAGON8	LOGO SKULLFIRE
LOGO SCORPIONS	LOGO COOLS	LOGO PAEC	LOGO SUNRISE1	LOGO YINYANG2	LOGO 5SAINTS
LOGO TRIBAL1	LOGO BESPREN3	LOGO SEXYMA	LOGO LUVBIRD	LOGO PLAY1	LOGO BARCODE1
LOGO TEDDYHART	LOGO MAUS	LOGO MRSUAVE1	LOGO KUMUSTA	LOGO STILLHERE	LOGO GIMMES
LOGO LUVSIGN	LOGO MYBEAR	LOGO SEXYBABY	LOGO HAPPY	LOGO HUNNY	LOGO DOGGIN

Picture Messages



PIC BLOWHART	PIC ALWAYS1	PIC CRUSHMO	PIC BIRDYLUV	PIC BEARHUG1	PIC NICEDAY	PIC WUZUP
PIC CALLING	PIC BESPREN2	PIC OTSO2	PIC SEXYBABE	PIC BHAPI	PIC DOG2LOG	PIC SENDKISS
PIC 4MYLUV1	PIC SABIK1	PIC WITHU	PIC URINMY	PIC BEMINE1	PIC NIDHUG	

Ringtones

RINGTONE	ARTIST/COMPOSER	KEYWORDS
Mr. Suave	Parokya ni Edgar	**TONE MRSUAVE**
Spaghetti Song	Sexbomb	**TONE SPAG**
Forever's Not Enough	Sarah Geronimo	**TONE 4EVERSNOT**
Maybe	Enrique Iglesias	**TONE MAYBE**
Happy	Rolling Stones	**TONE HAPPY**
Where Is The Love	Black Eyed Peas	**TONE WERISLUV**
Perfect	True Faith	**TONE PERFECT**
I'll Be	Edwin McCain	**TONE IBE**
Unwell	Matchbox 20	**TONE UNWELL**
Behind Blue Eyes	Limp Bizkit	**TONE BEHINDB**
Awit Ng Kabataan	Rivermaya	**TONE KABATAAN**
From The Inside	Linkin Park	**TONE FROMTHE**
Hey Whatever	Westlife	**TONE HEYWHAT**
Broken Vow	Lara Fabian	**TONE BROKEN**
Fallen	Sara McLachlan	**TONE FALLEN**
Mr. Suave Version 2	Parokya ni Edgar	**TONE MRSUAVE2**
Build Me Up, Buttercup	Sound Alike	**TONE BUTTERCUP**
Numb	Linkin Park	**TONE NUMB**
Bakit Inibig Pa Kita	Ladine Roxas	**TONE BAKITIBIG**
Gold	Spandau Ballet	**TONE GOLD**
Theme of Prontera	Level Up	**TONE PRONTERA**
Karma Chameleon	Culture Club	**TONE KARMA**
Can't Lose You	F4	**TONE CANTLOSE**
Thoia Thoing	R. Kelly	**TONE THOIA**
Pare Ko	Eraserheads	**TONE PAREKO**
Crazy Little Thing Called Love	Michael Buble	**TONE CRAZYL**
Feeling This	Blink 182	**TONE FEELINGT**
Sweet Dreams	Eurythmics	**TONE SWEETD**
Trouble	Pink	**TONE TROUBLEP**
White Flag	Dido	**TONE WHITEF**

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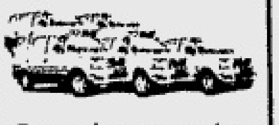

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Looking back on 2003
/C6-C7

THE POWER OF WORDS

Fear and paranoia in Manila

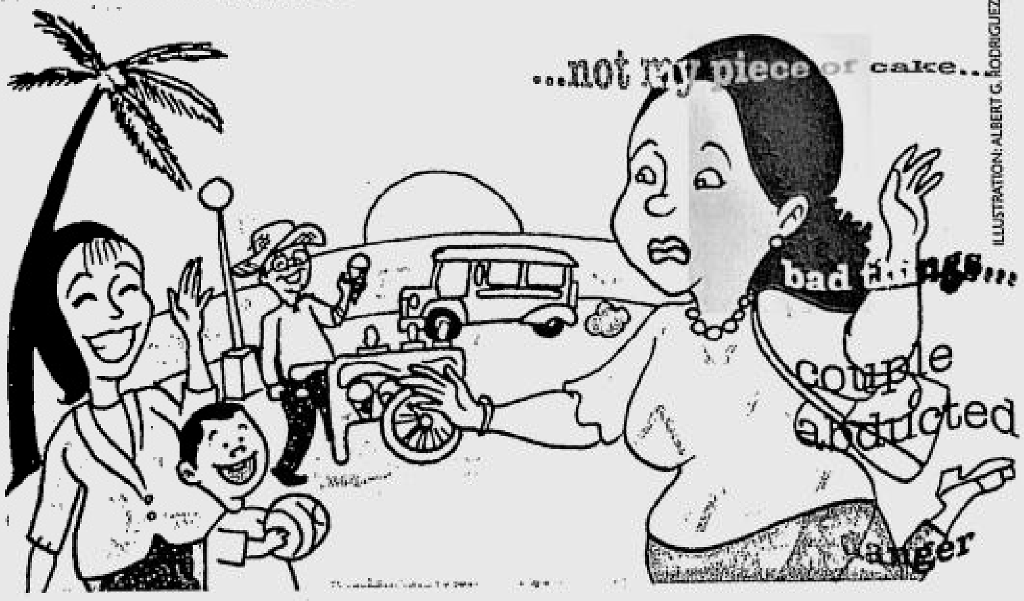

...not my piece of cake...
bad things...
couple abducted
danger

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

An expatriate from Tuvalu, South Pacific, writes how words and images made her fear living in the Philippines. But after two years, she finds it hard to say goodbye

By Lita Pita
Contributor

WRAPPING my beach towel tightly around my 8- shaped figure, I peek through my bedroom window into Edsa just down below. I am not spying on anything. I am just right in the middle of pulling out my clothes from the curtained glass-door wardrobe, when a loud squeaking of vehicle brakes startles me.

It is a great morning with the sun already showering its glory on all that lies at its mercy. The apartment roofs across the road, a wall signifying a village with all its complexities, some hungry plants and trees and the four-lane road. Everything lies dormant except for the zooming vehicles piloting my eyes and spouting live fumes.

"I almost missed this rare vision," I sigh to myself. I mean I had almost missed the opportunity to experience living in this part of the world called the Philippines.

This is a long story cut in half about the power that underlies words. I would not have felt it without this rare experience.

I come from Tuvalu, one of the smallest, remotest places on the planet in the South Pacific, where traveling East is unspoken of, unless one is lucky to be a government official on official business or a seaman. So when the news of my husband's assignment to ADB in Manila was confirmed, how hungry I became for every detail of what would be my new home for two years!

I frequented the Internet and the government library. Not bad, but my longing and craving for more details of the Philippines was so strong it almost became like Rapunzel's mother's obsession for cabbages in the witch's garden. Luckily, no deals made with that one, otherwise I would have been in hot soup!

I remembered a few expatriates in Tuvalu who might have heard or visited the Philippines. All but one had heard a lot but never visited the place.

"I have heard a lot of bad things going on in that country. I've never been there but the Philippines is not my piece of cake." That comment really punctured my tires; the piercing was so straight on that I crumbled under my own weight. That was just enough to end the conversation.

My mind was all over the place figuring out, "bad things... not my piece of cake." If it's not that sweet, creamy, or savory, then what is it—soggy, spooky, rough? But why doesn't this person like my new home-to-be? Tiredness overcame me as my mind surfed more gigantic waves.

Somehow, in my search, I remembered my vacation times in high school that I used to spend in Nauru, a country in the South Pacific. There, I saw Filipino men as laborers in all sorts of jobs, from mining the phosphate to working as electricians. Fortunately, a neighbor had just been repatriated from Nauru as there was no more phosphate to be mined. I plucked up the courage and walked over to his house for a brief conversation.

"Yes there are a lot of them in Nauru. A lot of them are industrious, intelligent, hygienic, but they are a bunch of jealous types. At worst when they get offended, they knife you to death."

My mouth dropped open, my pulse was disturbed at the thought of a sharp knife with blood running down from it. How can they do this, why can't they fight man to man... I mean fist to fist, at least only a little blood there? I felt like being in the operating room. I was so sick just imagining the worst scenes.

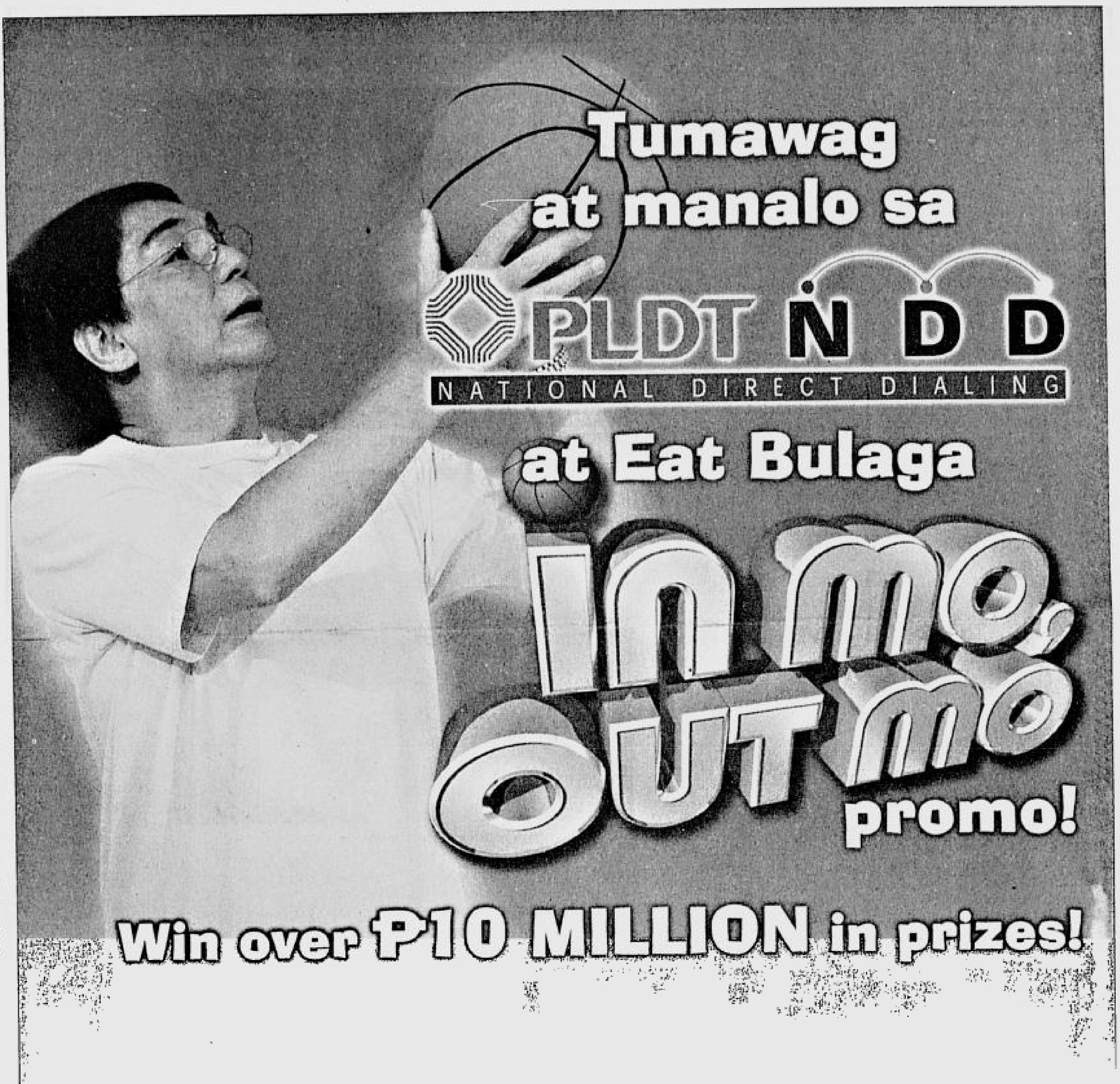
Next stop

My next stop was the seamen who were the greatest travelers from the islands. They had been recruited to work on overseas vessels since the establishment of Tuvalu's only maritime school. They were mostly recruited by German shipping companies. I happened to meet one and he assured me the Philippines was a great place for shopping but related an incident at the Manila South Harbor.

He and his fellow seamen were on a night out and on their return to the boat, men with machetes attacked them. He said the seamen were quite drunk but their drunkenness vanished like vapor at the sight of glittering sharp machetes. Luckily, the port section guards were on patrol that moment and came to their rescue.

To top it all, when my husband went ahead to Manila for a meeting, he was drugged outside Edsa-Shangri-La Hotel. He was supposed to leave the hotel for ADB in a car designated for him. As he came out of the lobby, a flashy car stopped in front of him. The driver got out

FEAR/ C3



Napakadaling Sumali sa PLDT NDD "In Mo, Out Mo" Promo!
Saan ka man sa Pilipinas, basta mag PLDT NDD, makakajackpot ka!

STEP 1. Gamitin ang PLDT NDD sa pagtawag ng long distance saan man sa Pilipinas. Kada P75 worth ng NDD calls (PLDT-PLDT, PLDT to any landline, PLDT to cellphones) on specified cut-off call dates per game, gives you a chance to join. Please refer to schedule.

STEP 2. Ang promo na ito ay open to all PLDT NDD residential subscribers nationwide, of good credit standing and at least 18 years old.

STEP 3. Using the PLDT system, 75 callers will be randomly selected to become contestants of In Mo, Out Mo segment in Eat Bulaga. Antayin ang tawag ng PLDT NDD promo representative para sa detalye.

STEP 4. Lahat ng 75 verified contestants ay dapat pumunta sa Eat Bulaga on the day of the game. Hanapin ang aming Eat Bulaga representative para sa briefing and present the ff:
i. Latest PLDT Bill
ii. Valid ID
iii. Pin given by PLDT
iv. Waiver or letter of authorization kung representative kayo ng actual verified participant based on PLDT list given to Eat Bulaga.

Lahat ng winners sa regular games ay babalik sa Grand Game kung saan isang kotse ang iuuwi bukod sa napanalunang cash!

Tawag na! Gamitin ang inyong PLDT NDD sa mga dates na ito para makasali sa studio games!

Cut off dates Of NDD Calls	Game Date	Cut off dates Of NDD Calls	Game Date
October 15-25	29-Oct	December 1-7	10-Dec
October 15-25	31-Oct	December 1-7	12-Dec
October 26-Nov 2	5-Nov	December 8-14	17-Dec
October 26-Nov 2	7-Nov	October 15-December 14	19-Dec
November 3-9	12-Nov	December 15-21	24-Dec
November 3-9	14-Nov	December 15-21	2-Jan
November 10-16	19-Nov	December 22-January 4	7-Jan
October 15-Nov 9	15-Nov	December 22-January 4	9-Jan
November 17-23	26-Nov	January 5-January 11	14-Jan
November 17-23	28-Nov	January 5-January 11	16-Jan
November 24-30	3-Dec	January 12-18	21-Jan
October 15 - Nov 30	5-Dec	Final Game (prev winners)	24-Jan

Manood lang ng Eat Bulaga para sa updated game schedule at announcements.

Kailangan niyo ba ng tulong sa pagsali sa promo? Tumawag lang po sa 171 para sa inyong mga katanungan.

PLDT 75 THINK AHEAD

Ugaliing mag-PLDT NDD! As low as P5.00 per minute lang—
Malinaw na ang linya, napakamura pa!
At pwede ka pang manalo sa "In Mo, Out Mo ng Eat Bulaga"! Kaya tawag na!

Promo period is from Oct. 15, 2003 - Jan. 18, 2004.
See Direct Mailer for more details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2983. Series of 2003

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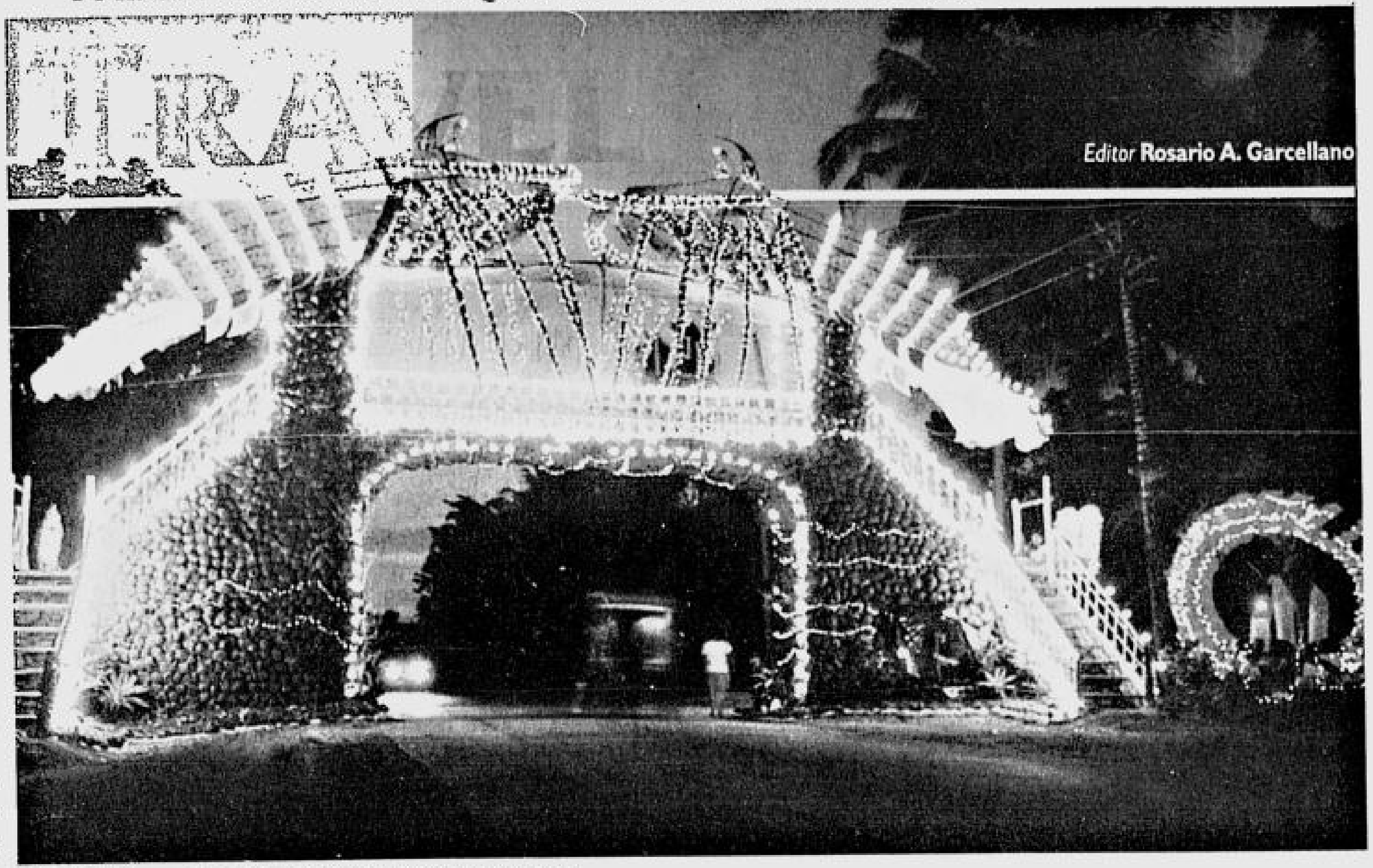
It's still Christmas in Tangub



BATTLE of the arches: Pair of lobsters in Barangay Silanga...

Text and photos by Ma. Congee S. Gomez
Contributor

THE PLAN to visit Tangub City was drawn up in mid-October.

It was not random, having surfaced in many conversations with photographer George Tapan. The problem was that enthusiasm was thin.

"Where's that?" friends asked. "In Misamis Occidental," I said.

So the plan was discussed in Cagayan de Oro (CDO) with Yoyong Esmedalla of the Department of Tourism in Northern Mindanao, who recommended two entry points to reach Tangub: Lumbia airport in CDO or Dipolog City.

From Lumbia, I take a taxi (more or less P100) to bring me to the westbound terminal in Barangay Bulua. The small buses bound for Ozamiz City are parked here. It's a three-hour ride to Ozamiz, then a jeepney ride from there to Tangub. The stretch from Ozamiz to Tangub is about 160 kilometers.

The 154-km bus ride from Dipolog costs P120-P140 per person. The trip on a well-paved road shaded by grown gmelina, acacia and other hardwood trees is guaranteed scenic.

But what's with Tangub at the end of one year and the beginning of the next, when Metro Manila beams with countless happenings? What's with these 16,572 hectares, 10,400 of which are devoted to agriculture?

A brochure on the city, hand-delivered by Norman Bantug, states: "It's more than the usual Christmas between Dec. 1 and Feb. 4. The townsfolk celebrate Christmas with a showcase of marvelous symbols of varied forms, sizes and structures. Because of the 64-day Christmas celebration, the city has earned the title 'Christmas symbols capital of the Philippines.'"

Lean season

If the Tangub brochure stresses the city as rich in agricultural and marine resources, a quick validation may end up in frustration.

Day Two of the stay, specifically spent roaming around, showed a dearth of homegrown products. The foremost reason for the gap is that the tail-end of the year is a lean season in Tangub, therefore not much marine and veggie harvests are expected. Neighboring suppliers in General Santos, Pagadian and Tubod in Lanao del Norte share their produce.

At that time, seafood hauled from the neighbors included *bariles* (P60-P70/kilo), blue crab (P160/kilo), *ubod* (eel, P50/kilo) and *tamban* (P20/kilo). Except for the papaya variety of Red Lady (P15/kilo) and *buntot pagi* (manta ray, P40/kilo) from Panguil Bay, nothing was homegrown.

Aside from the lean season, Tangub Mayor Jennifer Wee-Tan said, the few local growers preferred to sell by bulk to other places where the demand was higher.

The city's public relations officer, Judith Bayog, was direct to the point: "The people of Tangub do not have enough cash to buy the produce."

Not only that. The Tangub youth themselves deal with the crisis of employment immediately after finishing secondary or tertiary education. CDO, Ozamiz, Cebu or Metro Manila provide the supposed greener pastures, or they stay put to tend the farms.

Wee-Tan is thus waging a battle to make her people blend with new ideas, innovative activities and examples implemented by other cities. She wants her people to be self-reliant, to be entrepreneurs, and to abandon complacency.

The fulcrum of development in Tangub these days is agri-aqua and tourism. The tourism plan includes the "completion" of Hoyohoy Peak by 2005 (meaning, the construction of good roads, a beefed-up security, and participatory promotion with the locals taking up the challenge); the improvement of Sulaton island as breeding ground for *lapu-lapu*; and the "commercialization" of Panguil Bay.

Of course, Tangub's biggest lure happens between Dec. 1 and Feb. 4, when the whole city is perked up with brightly lit arches, lanterns and booths.

Hoyohoy Peak

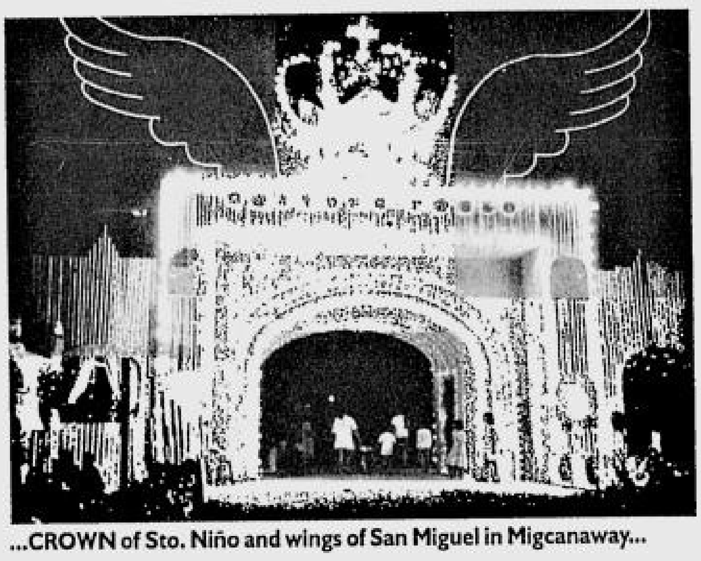
I visit Hoyohoy out of curiosity, never mind if the road is rough and the distance from the city is 12.5 km, spelling a drive of close to 40 minutes.

The word "hoyohoy" means "continuous blowing of a soft cold breeze." It sits at 11,000 feet above sea level and its temperature usually registers between 18 and 15 degrees Centigrade.

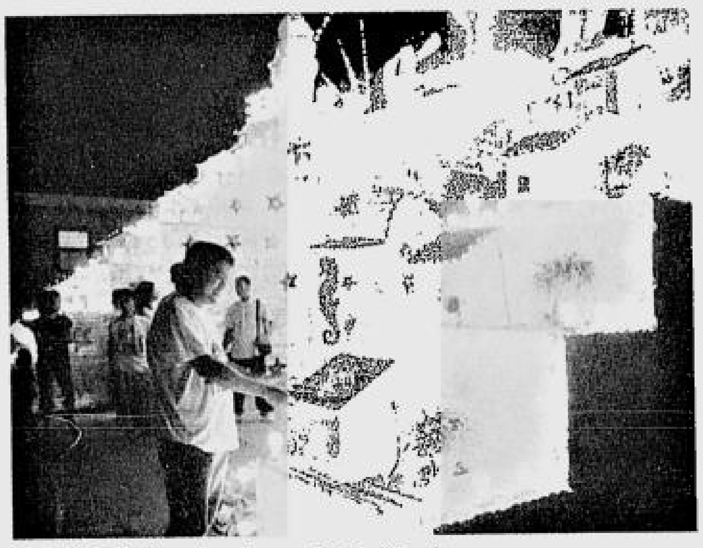
The night is chillingly cold, lowest at 10 degrees. It is foggy the noontime we are there, and the temperature drops to 15 degrees.

On the rough road, you bump your butt many times on the edge of an improvised thin-cushioned seat. This is because the driver avoids any clash with mean-looking boulders. You slide a bit from your seat and grapple with the abaca rope tied at the foot of the seat for balance.

You sense that the lives of the passengers depend on how good the driver's backings are. (It helped that he drove a four-wheel-drive to Hoyohoy. Otherwise, we would all have been gazing at the sky in no man's land, waiting for help to come.)



...CROWN of Sto. Niño and wings of San Miguel in Migcanaway...



...GAWAD Kalinga housing project in Mantic

Vast Hoyohoy (6,944 hectares) is part of Mt. Malindang's 53,262-hectare watershed area. It overlooks the Labo River, affords a hand's stretch to Ozamiz, and allows you to see dramatic figments of Lanao del Norte from afar.

TOUCHING the clouds on Hoyohoy Peak

Panguil Bay cuts a beautiful S-shape.

Yes, here you can yell to your heart's delight but it will be a futile activity because nature rules the sound. A sturdy-looking chapel, built on boulders last year, accentuates the unceasing green landscape.

Divert your stroll a bit, and a sanctuary of plants and flowers unfolds before your eyes. Here, caretakers Floro Neris, Reuen Morales and Christian Jumalon try their best to identify the various species: dahlia, African daisy, aster, bougainvillea, morning flower, *cucharita* and *mayana* in yellow, violet and green-red.

"We grow them for the visitors to see; the veggies on the demo farm are for our consumption," says Neris.

The supply of power and water is constant, and there are six available wooden beds for a good visit. Nature is irresistibly impressive, with the gentle murmur of a running river in the background. But if you expect luxury at your fingertips, I suggest you forget about coming here!

The means of transport are still the jeepney and the motorcycle-powered *habal-habal*. The jeepney fare from Hoyohoy to Tangub or to Ozamiz (Tuesday, Friday and Sunday) is P15-P20/person, one way. The *habal-habal* takes the same route daily at P30-P40/person.

But security measures have yet to be put in place. Mayor Wee-Tan can only rely on the vigilance of her constituents to monitor suspected activities. She closely works with Misamis Occidental Gov. Lito Ocampos, to hasten the improvement of the road.

As for the alleged "outsiders" in nearby Barangays Manggahan and Tituron, the Tangub folk are optimistic that this problem will in time be solved.

'Bayanihan'

This makes sense: vigilance, entrepreneurship and integration in a laid-back community. Judith Bayog chose to live in Tangub than in Cotabato because life is simple here.

Long-time residents describe the city as a retirement haven steeped in traditional ways. The *bayanihan* custom, especially when Christmas is celebrated, is unique.

Only Tangub celebrates the longest holiday season, and close to 52,000 flock to the city plaza to be part of the delight. (Bantug phoned last Dec. 25 to report the huge turnout of merrymakers.)

"Putting up an arch requires individuals to coin a theme," says Francesca Lopez, barangay *capitana* of Migcanaway. "Implementing the designs needs designer, electrician and carpenter. To spruce it up, we need to gather the required materials. Teamwork is necessary to come up with something as beautiful as this."

Hopping from one barangay to another, you'd tend to believe that the lavish adornments are a characteristic of a revenue-driven city.

The arches, as high as 25 feet, are lighted from 6 p.m. to midnight. The city foots the power bill but the budget is mainly taken from the barangay's Internal Revenue Allotment.

Lopez and the other barangay captains—Mariano Trompeta Jr., Benedicto Aro, Edgar Fernandez, Anecelin del Valle and Cristina Abatayo, of Mantic, Maloro, Tres, Cinco and Maguilao, respectively—invoke the spirit of *bayanihan* in explaining the success of their celebration.

"Nothing comes easy without volunteerism," says Trompeta.

Reunion

"Of course, we are happy working on our arch. It's like a reunion of sorts," remarks Jonathan Lopez of Migcanaway.

The images on each theme change yearly. The latest features range from Panguil Bay Bridge 2002, *banagan* (lobster), crown of the Sto. Nino, Three Wise Men, chalice, houses, Santa Claus, manger set, wings of San Miguel, water fountains, to patterns of hollow blocks.

Each arch is lighted by 200 bulbs, more or less, of 25-50 watts. One barangay hired two designers, a carpenter and an architect; others relied on ingenuity.

Even Jonathan mounted electrical connections based on a computation of amperes. He used outdoor sockets. He studied the flow of the current and instructed his town mates to switch off the lights when it rains.

Jonathan says Tangubanons always look forward to this special event. Meetings are held as early as September, and formal construction begins in the first week of November.

Comments from people in the streets:

"We enjoy ourselves every December because we're united."

"We have picnics in the streets daily."

"We're happy; it's like we have not lost hope."

"We waited for the results of the first judging. We didn't sleep until we heard our barangay called."

"Everyone works; no one's idle."

If this doesn't spell holiday season to you, I don't know what else can.

Around town

One thing worth mentioning is the food court adjacent to the city office.

It is a facility provided by the city government for its employees and constituents, and comprises the RNM Food Haus, Dianne's Delicacies, Desiree's Eatery, Brenda's and Anghay's Carinderia, operating all year round.

RMN food server Gloria Ubon brightens mornings with her amiable ways.

Bayog wrote in to say that guests could stay at the Warren Pension House or at the Technology Livelihood Development Center. (But it's not a good idea to mix guests with trainees undergoing livelihood seminars at the TLDC. Also, when you leave food or bottled water in the refrigerator there, even with a tag of ownership, you will likely find these gone the next day.)

But what makes Tangub tick at this time of the year?

Is it Wee-Tan's God-centered, participatory and straightforward views, or the *bayanihan* trait that underscores the people's values?

Let's say it's more of a personal transformation in the visitor: surroundings replete with lights for 64 days; a train coach setting off at night with you on board; smiles revving up your mornings; happily engaging people around you in light banter.

Seldom can one experience reverting back to child-like ways. It's truly priceless.

CHAPEL of stone

TRAVELBRIEFS

Holy Land tour

A TOUR of the Holy Land with an extension to Marian sites in Europe is being organized by the Tower Book House.

The tour includes, among others, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea, Qumran, Jericho, Tiberias, Yardent, Mt. Tabor, Haifa, Caesarea and Tel Aviv.

The European extension, on the other hand, includes Santarem, Lisbon and Fatima in Portugal; Salamanca, Burgos and San Sebastian in Spain; Lourdes, Nice, and Monte Carlo in France; and Florence, Assisi and Rome in Italy.

A Filipino priest, a Filipino tour escort and a local guide will be part of the group.

For inquiries, call 815-4938 or 815-6925 or visit the Tower Book House office at Windsor Tower, 163 Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Easy payments

CEBU Pacific (CEB) recently forged an agreement with Equitable-PCIBank allowing passengers to enjoy the convenience of the airline's E-Ticket facility.

The contract was signed by CEB's Jeanette Yu and Vera Lim (VP for treasury and reservations director) and Equitable-PCI's Walter Wassmer and Edward Wenceslao (EVP and SVP).

Also present at the ceremony were Nana de Vera and Candice Iyog, the bank's AVP for corporate banking and the airline's marketing director.

Equitable-PCI clients may now pay for their CEB E-tickets anytime, anywhere through FastNet, FastPhone or Fasteller. They simply have to book through CEB Reservations at 636-4938, get the exact amount to be paid, then pay through the bank's Internet, phone and and ATM facilities.

Receipts will be issued by e-mail, fax or over the counter.

Award for PTA GM

PHILIPPINE Tourism Authority general manager Robert Dean Barbers was recently named "Best Presidential Appointee" by the Metro Manila Broadcasters Association (MMBA) led by Rod Ison of ABS-CBN's radio station dzMM.

The MMBA presented the award to Barbers in rites aboard the WG&A Super Ferry 12 at the South Harbor. The other awardees were civic leaders and other government officials.

Barbers was commended for his efforts to boost the tourism sector through projects that involved attracting more investments and implementing the 30-percent discount for students and youth for use of PTA facilities; a program of "unity, competence and excellence" among PTA officers and employees; and the installation of 188 view decks and tourist information centers nationwide, to complement the National Highway.

PTA's flagship program, which also reaped a positive response, was the launch of "B.E.S.T in the Philippines," which stands for "Boosting Eco-Socio Tourism" and "Boosting Exciting Sites and Trips."

Fear and paranoia in Manila

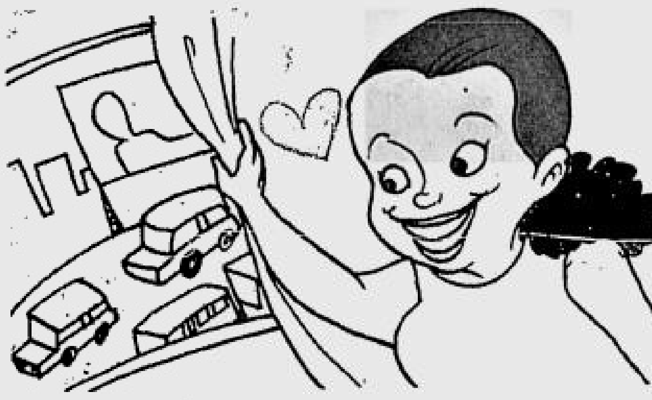


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

From page C1

and asked whether he was going to ADB. When he nodded, the driver opened the passenger door and gestured for him to get in. He saw another man, well-dressed beside the driver. The second man gave my husband a drink in a can which he thought was courteous.

He took the can, opened it and within 10 minutes he became unconscious. He woke up in a hospital that afternoon, without his checks, passport and cash.

Because I am a very sensitive person, what I heard was enough to drug my wobbly mind. I begged my husband that I'd rather remain home and save my career, which was in a way a lie. My husband and I had been separated so many times due to our educational pursuits and work trips. My husband could not bear this long separation any more; he begged me to come and said the trip would benefit the whole family. I convinced myself to give it a try.

The whole trip to Manila took three different planes and two days. We were quite exhausted when we arrived at Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Due to my preconception of the place, everything in sight looked suspicious. The look on my face was stern and I felt more like a mother hen fully geared to jump at the enemy at the slightest advance. It was as if I could smell danger attacking us from every direction. The thought numbed my body and mind.

I was relieved when we finally got into a minibus to transport us to Discovery Hotel.

The security outside the hotel, I thought, was tight enough to protect us. After the formalities at the reception desk, a porter directed us to the elevator. Within minutes, we were in our suite. How my family admired our compact air-conditioned home, equipped with a lounge, a kitchen and three bedrooms with TV sets! We did not waste time but immersed and pampered ourselves in the comfort and extravagance of our temporary home.

The hotel provided us with complimentary breakfast. My husband learned from a security guard that Megamall was just within walking distance. I didn't dare expose my family to all that I heard of. If there was anything to get outside of the hotel, it had to be me to venture forth.

I was usually the first person to wake up in the mornings. As I stumbled into the lounge, I sighted a newspaper stuck halfway through the main door. It was the morning paper that was complimentary to all hotel guests.

I was really curious to find out what the paper had to say, maybe the opposite of what I had heard.

Horrifying photo

Alas, I stared at the page-one photo of a dead man sprawled on the street, with oozing gun wounds. Didn't they have more palatable pictures to welcome the brand-new morning, especially their foreign visitors? A mixture of anger and sadness overcame me. And what if I had been the media, would I have said the weather was pretty good when there was a typhoon? My mind discarded the topic. My priority then was to equip myself for the dangers lurking.

Assessing myself, I realized I had more advantage over my opponents. I was huge compared to the majority of the small people I saw moving around in the streets below. I had neither gun nor knife, but I had my broad shoulders and strong build to frighten them.

I regretted not bringing my old torn T-shirts to go to the mall because I read they kidnapped a lot of the rich people. So I thought, if I dressed up like a beggar, no one would ever bother me.

I remember blowing up my shoulders, tensing my whole body to look tall, powerful and strong. I felt like Superman and the thought satisfied me. Gathering all my spirits, I crossed the road with more people circling me. I remember my body became heavy maybe due to the tense mental state I was in. I felt my head was about to explode, I felt my ears growing longer and my eyes becoming redder and bigger and were about to pop out of their sockets. It was as if I was in Jurassic Park with a dinosaur about to crush me. A few meters on, nothing happened. Ten meters, still nothing happened.

My mind came back to civilization. My body sort of loosened up a bit. Head and ears began to shrink, eyes knew where they belonged. But when were they going to striiiiiiiike? My poor feet staggered. My only wish then was to just stumble into the entrance to the mall. I followed the crowd and finally came to the entrance of Megamall. Security guards welcomed us with pistols at their sides. What a relief—at last I found my vocal cords mentally at the top note singing Celine Dion's song "I Am alive." Yes, I was still lucky to be alive.

After meandering in and out of the shops, asking directions here and there, finally I came to the supermarket. My mind could not comprehend the beauty of it all. The spectacular display, the huge variety of goods, the bulk and the crowd of people. I quickly selected my groceries, wheeled my trolley to the cashier, paid and left the supermarket through the same route. My mission was complete as I gathered my plastic bag of groceries.

It was on the way back that I slowed down. A bit relaxed, I became aware of all the smell lingering around me—the sweet aroma of freshly baked bread and food, cigarette smoke and many more that overwhelmed my nostrils. Something unusual in the air made my eyes sting and flicker throughout. Then I was amazed by the huge number of people. One Megamall full is already the population of my country.

Beautiful people

Then I noted also there was a mix of people—fair and dark, young and old, slim and short. I remember the sweet fragrance that whipped my nose as they passed—weren't they sweet? I liked the smooth skin and the beautiful faces and smiles and—gasp!—they must be the most beautiful people in the world! Yes, more than Barbie dolls! I spied their clothing: they were all nicely and richly dressed. Luckily I didn't wear any torn T-shirt.

Despite the beauty of Eden, a slight degree of suspicion still hung in the air. Don't jump yet; a snake can jump out of nowhere.

The walk home was more relaxed. The weight of the groceries slowed me down. A few people headed toward my direction, which was enough to relax me. I tried to map out a safe route to return to the hotel in case anything happened. I didn't realize I had finally hit the steps leading up to the entrance to my hotel.

I went up the escalator, gathered my four plastic bags of groceries and knocked on the door of our suite. I could hear running feet approaching the door. "How's it, mom?" asked my eldest daughter as she opened the door.

"Well, here I am safe and sound. It's a nice place but... they didn't strike today, maybe tomorrow or the next day or in weeks to come. At least we have to be cautious all the time."

We stayed in the hotel for one month before we moved into our new home in Valle Verde 5. At that time, the American couple and others had just been abducted from Palawan by the Abu Sayyaf and were still in captivity. So every safe return to the hotel chopped off a bit of my long ears and my blown-up head, and shrunk my reddened eyes. I returned to my normal self. Honestly, if there was a light touch on my shoulder on my first visit, I would have dropped dead as my fear was so intense.

.Our house in Valle Verde is very big compared to home in my country. We marveled at the neat workmanship, the unique architectural design and plan, the landscaping and the huge amount of money spent to build it. Even though we had been told that it was quite safe to stroll around the village, we sort of just peeped from our gate. Little by little we came out of our shell and enjoyed strolling around the village. We visited the clubhouse, joined the tennis club, the Halloween party and awareness programs in the social hall. Bit by bit we met other people at the children's park who became our best friends.

Blessings

Our first year in Manila was entirely spent driven by the power of words. The power was so strong like the walls around our village. In many ways it limited our adventures and clipped our wings. Fear and insecurity bored us to death. All our activities were limited to daytime. Nightlife was spent in front of the TV at home or strolling in the village. The farthest away from home we went was Tagaytay. Megamall was our only shopping haven. How I condemn my sensitive nature for letting mere black-and-white prints rule my world!

I have lived in Manila for two-and-a-half years and now, I know too much. We have only six months left before leaving here for good. Everything has been a blessing for my whole family. Everything has been a piece of cake! The remaining days are rolling by like the traffic piloting my eyes. I want to hold back the hands of the time, but everything seems to have its own way. I look back at all that has happened, all the rich experiences, and they seem just yesterday. Even though my territory has expanded to Divisoria, Manila Bay, Baguio, Subic, Captain Cook remains bold in his adventures.

As I grapple with all the powerful words that have painted images of and events about the Philippines, I realize that bad things happen everywhere in the world but in varying degrees. Now I realize what conjured more Draculas and monsters in me—putting pictures or faces to words. These conjurings add a tremendous power to words. I thank the media for shaping me and driving me nuts. Information is a good protection, but too much of it creates phobia and more phobia in weak beings.

Soon my wings will be in full flight, my tears will water my trail. I cling to my only possession—my *halo-halo* and heartfelt-experience in the Philippines that only words on paper could reveal.

AI AI DELAS ALAS Box-Office Queen
Comedienne/ TV Host

LIZA DIÑO
Mutya ng Pilipinas 2001
Commercial Model/ GMA 7 Talent

Clarissa Mercado
FHM Babe/ Bikini Model

April Boy Regino
Multi-awarded Singer/ Recording Star

Top Skin Secret of the Stars Revealed

A lot of us may be wondering how celebrities maintain their youthful, glowing, and radiant skin despite their busy schedules. Although the use of artificial methods is just but natural nowadays, some celebrities still believe in the word "natural". They are those who refuse to say, *"salamat po doktor."*

These stars are proud to reveal one of their top beauty secrets, and that is the use of local and herbal soaps.

LIKAS PAPAYA HERBAL SOAP **is one of the most sought after soaps of the stars. Its proven effectiveness in making the skin whiter, moisturized and radiant all the time is undeniable.**

Here are just some of the stars who swore by Likas Papaya's role in maintaining their glow.

Ai Ai delas Alas

Ai Ai is indeed a certified star after coveting the "Comedy Queen" title from her box-office movie, *Ang Tanging Ina* last year. With her many roles as a mother, comedienne, TV host and businesswoman, Ai Ai believes that Likas is the best choice when it comes to maintaining her skin.

Numerous times has she been quoted in television and print of using Likas.

"Ano ba naman yan? Ang laki ng binabayad ko sa Likas para pumuti, tapos iitim lang ako ulit."
- Yes Magazine. March 2003

"How do I maintain my youthful look? Salamat po sa Likas Papaya."
- Philippine Star. May 25. 2003

"Beauty secret? Likas Papaya. Simple lang. Hindi ako pwede ng kung anu-ano ang nilalagay."
- ABS-CBN.COM. June 1999

Liza Diño

Another celebrity who's very open about her patronage on Likas is the fresh, stunning beauty Liza Diño. Liza exudes poise and intelligence that made her unanimously earn the Mutya ng Pilipinas title in 2001. She is also known for her first product endorsement, Likas Papaya TVC testimonial, which can still be seen on air regularly. She even swore using the same product she endorses.

"One important factor to stay beautiful is to keep a healthy skin. That is why, I have always been a user of Likas because it made my skin more than just fairer, but really smooth, silky and blemish-free. It's the perfect soap for me! Effective ha!"

April Boy Regino

Isn't it surprising that even males, including the ultimate pop idol himself April Boy Regino are vain about their skin? April Boy's hectic schedule of recordings, performances, guest appearances and out-of-town shows has been keeping him stressed out several times, eventually affecting his skin and appearance. He attributes his well-taken-cared skin to Likas.

"Ang sabon ko dito Likas Papaya. Aba, yan ang nagpapaputi sa akin! Ilang taon ko na kasing ginagamit."
- Yes Magazine, October 2001

Clarissa Mercado

And to complete the list of Likas loyalists is the exotic beauty Clarissa Mercado. Clarissa is a former model and Miss Boracay Body Search Beauty title holder. With her perfect morena complexion and svelte body, she is the epitome of Filipino beauty at its best. As a newcomer, she understands the needs of being beautiful in the business.

"Taking care of the skin is really an important aspect in staying healthy and beautiful, kaya naman I do invest to look beautiful. I'm really not after becoming whiter or fairer kasi nagpapa-tan ako pero it's the way Likas pampers me that I fell in love with this soap... with Likas kasi, I feel so clean, refreshed, moisturized and radiant."

These stars, we know, can afford expensive and imported brands but still prefer Likas in maintaining their beautiful skin because of its proven effectiveness. With BFAD Approved no.CR#7541, Likas Papaya is enriched with papaya organic enzymes and all-natural botanical ingredients, so it's no denying that it is still one of the most outstanding local products in the country. We even caught Cito Beltran quoting on his last Dec. 2, 2003 airing of *The Insider (ABS-CBN Channel 2)*, "to always look for BFAD Approved products, most especially on Papaya whitening soaps." Now you see why Likas is trusted by millions of Filipinos, including the brightest stars. So what are you waiting for? Feel the Likas difference now!

ADVT

more great news
G

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Consumable Amount	₱800	₱1,200	₱1,800	₱2,500	₱3,500	₱5,000
Free Text	200	250	300	350	400	400
Globe to Globe	₱6.50	₱6.00	₱5.00	₱4.50	₱4.00	₱4.00
Globe to non-Globe	₱7.00	₱6.50	₱6.00	₱5.50	₱4.50	₱4.50
IDD	$0.40 ANYTIME, ANYWHERE					
Text fee after free SMS	₱1.00/msg	₱0.50/msg	₱0.50/msg	₱0.50/msg	₱0.50/msg	₱0.50/msg

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Consumable amount covers voice calls (local, NDD, IDD), text (local, International Text) and VAS.
Free text allocation applies to local text messages (Globe-to-Globe & Globe to other networks).

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Globe to Globe	₱6.00	₱5.50	₱5.00	₱4.50	₱4.00	₱3.50	₱3.50
Globe to non-Globe	₱7.50	₱7.00	₱6.50	₱6.00	₱5.50	₱4.50	₱4.50
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Rates are inclusive of VAT and Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment (CERA).
Free text allocation applies to local text messages (Globe to Globe & Globe to other networks).
Free call allocation applies to local calls (Globe-to-Globe, Globe to other networks, Globe to landline, NDD calls).

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Globe HANDYPHONE

Looking back

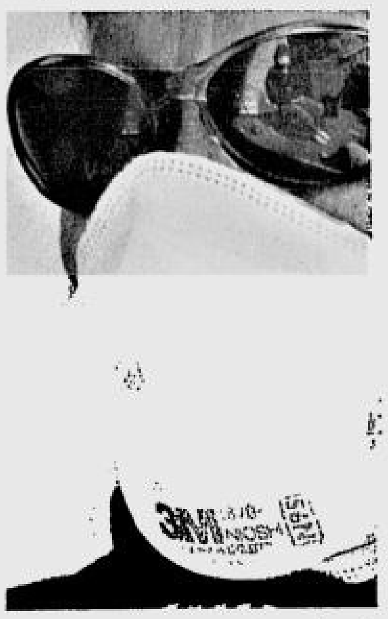
In a year clouded by the dust of a deadly epidemic, in a year when sex balls happened on live noontime TV and bishops betrayed their vows of chastity, in a year when a boy band caused mass hysteria and more show biz personalities began making overtures about running for public office, what events affected our lifestyles, whether pervasively or subtly?

More on page C7

NO MORE SIN
That's what you think. Yes, Jaime Cardinal Sin, the powerful archbishop of Manila who called for the two Edsa revolutions, now 75, has gone into canonical retirement. But he promised he would always be around to give spiritual support to the faithful.

EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSALES
Named by the Vatican to succeed Sin was Lipa Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, who is also chair of the committee under the bishops' conference that is looking into clerical sexual abuses. A benign figure known for his environmental activism, Rosales held out the hope that the Church would try to come clean on the alleged abuses of its clergy while enhancing its pastoral initiatives to make the powerful institution a more faithful instrument for spiritual and social change.

SARS and the new hypochondria



AT first referred to mildly as the Asian Flu, the epidemic nicknamed SARS began to exact its toll of Asian and Canadian lives just as the Asian economy was also taking a dive early in 2003. Its name alone —Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome —struck dread in the hearts of tourists. "Syndrome" connotes an unexplainable amalgamation of things. Add to it "severe" and "acute" and it sounds like a double whammy.

Asian tourism was set back because American, Europeans and Australians chose to stay home. Shopping destinations like Hong Kong and Singapore became ghost towns. Body temperature monitors became *de riguer* at airports. Guest workers in affected cities were sent home.

The Philippines had its share of SARS cases but, by and large, it was able to contain the epidemic. But like the rest of Asia, it struggled with the panic of SARS. Makati office workers wore masks to work to stave off the air-borne virus. Companies enforced quarantine on employees who made trips to SARS-infected cities. People got off elevators whenever someone inside started coughing. Pinoys washed themselves with rubbing alcohol. Sales of alcohol gel rose. Ascorbic acid tablets sold like candies. Already swept by the fitness trend, Filipinos found another excuse to worry about their health. If anything, SARS unleashed a new wave of hypochondria and even narcissism. For what good were buffing, pampering and primming if a virus could sweep aside everything with just one sneeze?

Sins of the Fathers

JUST three days after the Philippine Church buttressed its reputation as the Christian light of Asia by hosting the Vatican-organized World Meeting of Families in January, the nation was rocked by the revelation that Antipolo Bishop Crisostomo Yalung (left), one of the rising stars of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, had sired a child. Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco relieved him and named Aklan Bishop Gabriel Reyes in his place.

But the prompt action did not completely douse the fire of clerical sexual scandal, not at a time when the American Catholic Church was fending off accusations it handled clerical pederasts with kid gloves over several decades. The US scandals were said to have blunted Pope John Paul II's diplomatic campaign to stop the Bush White House from invading Iraq.

Midway into the year, another high-profile and respected hierarch, Bishop Teodoro Bacani of Novaliches (right), was accused by his secretary of sexual harassment. The Nuncio acted even quicker this time, suspending Bacani and naming La Union Bishop Antonio Tobias as apostolic administrator. Bacani denied the charge, but before the year was over, submitted his resignation.

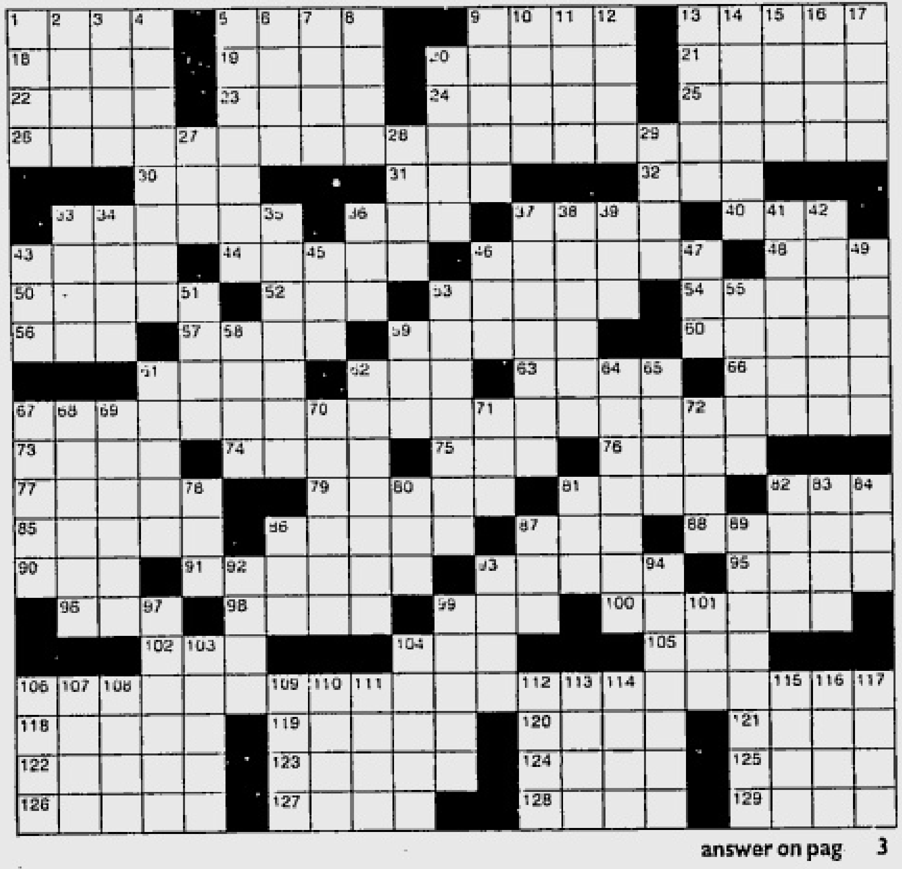
SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Donna J. Stone

FOOLING AROUND

ACROSS
1 Mr. Walesa
5 Sunflower support
9 Musical symbol
13 Kiddie-lit pachyderm
18 At rest
19 Entice
20 Still here
21 Century plant
22 Leg-puller
23 Model Carre
24 Atelier item
25 Actress Leslie
26 Start of a remark by Billie Holiday
30 — -di-dah
31 Behave like a bunny
32 Actress Munson
33 "The Wind in the Willows" critter
36 Dandy
37 Hummus holder
40 Deranged
43 Boxer LaMotta
44 Sitting duck?
46 Eastern temple
48 Massage
50 Put up with
52 — nut
53 Broadcast again
54 — Boothe Luce
56 Golfer Hogan
57 Hard work
59 Heart part
60 Convent wear
61 "The Sweetest Taboo" singer
62 Donkey
63 Privy to
66 Force
67 Middle of remark
73 Memo start
74 Tear to bits
75 Composer Rorem
76 Gen. Robt. —
77 Summer ermine
79 Stick one's neck out
81 Emancipate
82 Sneak a peek
85 Publisher Nast
86 Michelangelo masterpiece
87 "— to Me" ('64 hit)
88 Math relationship
90 Like-minded
91 "— Knowledge" ('71 film)
93 A la King?
95 Tranquil
96 Road curve
98 Author Anita
99 Everything
100 Harm
102 Actress Massen
104 Say please
105 Cumberland —
106 End of remark
118 Blackmore's "Lorna —"
119 Burnt sienna or green
120 At any time
121 Bow part
122 Furry fisherman
123 African capital
124 Tabriz currency
125 Deep unconsciousness
126 Find out
127 Art deco designer
128 Scads
129 Harbinger

DOWN
1 Role for 25 Across
2 Prepare for the press
3 Crow's toe
4 Announced
5 Moved through mud
6 "Swan Lake" skirt
7 Bogosian or Burdon
8 Engage, as gears
9 Carpentry device
10 Hartman or Kudrow
11 Daredevil Knievel
12 Tumbled
13 Philosopher Francis
14 Massachusetts city
15 Holstein's home
16 Declare
17 Descartes or Levesque
20 Moral man?
27 Give in to gravity
28 Nautical cry
29 Warty one
33 Bunyan's ox
34 Related
35 Assuage
36 Driving hazard
37 Had a ball
38 Exotic pet
39 32,000 ounces
41 Lawrence's locale
42 Throughout
43 Pugilistic poke
45 — -de-sac
46 By means of
47 Essen exclamation
49 Ms. Midler
51 Coup d'—
53 Arquette of "The Whole Nine Yards"
55 Soup scoop
58 — -Neisse Line
59 Type of tray
61 "Slammin' Sam"
62 San — Fault
64 Went to extremes
65 "Aida" river
67 "— Inferno" ('78 hit)
68 Chant
69 Plays the bagpipes
70 California town
71 Center of gravity?
72 Lascivious look
78 Dick Tracy, e.g.
80 Part of A&P
81 Remote
82 Doe's darling
83 Heap
84 — Kippur
86 Paid player
87 Writer Kaufman
89 Presley movie site
92 Be — unto oneself
93 Nevada city
94 How beavers act?
97 Tulsa type
99 Texas athlete
101 Welcome item?
103 Violinist Isaac
104 Venerate
106 Sacred cow
107 Act like grandma
108 Greek vowel
109 "— homo"
110 Rime
111 Got off
112 Semester
113 Converse competitor
114 Former New Jersey governor
115 Inn offering
116 "Caro —" ("Rigoletto" aria)
117 Cross



answer on pag 3

La Chaine des Rotisseurs marks 10th year

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Picornell

SYMPHONY in Ice was the theme of the 10th anniversary dinner of La Chaine des Rotisseurs in Cebu. The memorable event was held at the Mactan ballroom of the Shangri-La's resort, transformed into a Winter Wonderland.

There were ice sculptures, glistening white twigs dripping with crystal balls and icicles, silvery tinsel, and immaculate satin tablecloths in the three large tables that accommodated 60 guests all in all.

Quite a number, said a radiant **Amparito Lhuillier**, who is La Chaine's Madame La Bail, here. Most of the guests had reserved with plenty of time, which made the elaborate menu easier to plan and bring about, assured GM **Desmond Hatton** and **Dexter Cheng**, who is in charge of F&B.

Fred Frank Fricke flew down from Manila for this important milestone, and to make a few announcements. First was to appoint **Dr. Nestor Alonso** to a vacancy in the board which is led by **Amparito, Teresing Mendezona, Chef Dietmar Dietrich, Dr. Julian Divinagracia and Al Evangelio.**

He also announced that former **Baili Marlinda Tan** and **Richard Uysiuseng** now have been upgraded to "officier de La Chaine."

French champagne and salmon canapes were served during the predinner reception at the glass-enclosed hall adjacent to the Mactan ballroom. This was the perfect occasion for everyone to greet each other, and to take a look at the board where the seating assignments were written.

Choy and **Rosebud Sala** couldn't find theirs, and it was all the fault of the artist who made the letterings. They had seats of honor at the most important table. No problem, laughed Rosebud's chum **Norma Selma Gullas**, First Lady of Taliday City, who pointed out that her name had been listed twice. Another double entry was Lydia Aznar Ilfonso.

Dress code for this occasion was Barong Filipino and black pants for the men, and any color except black for the long gowns of the ladies. **Margie Lhuillier**, just arrived from Las Vegas, swept into the hall in a dazzling white dress and a king's ransom of diamonds on her swan neck.

Dinner started with Oyster Ravioli spiked by Beluga caviar, and ice cold vodka. Then came a fillet of red snapper filled with pumpkin, walnuts and cheese.

The lobster and salmon chowder was accompanied by a delicious white wine—Santa Cristina, Antinori 2000 from Tuscany in Italy. It was so good some whispered to the waiters to serve it as long as it lasted, even well into the entree.

A granite of apple and basil prepared the tastebuds for the main course—char-grilled lamb with Skordalia, an olive parsley salad, and other garnishings. The wine was a rich Cabernet Sauvignon Xanadu 2000 from the Margaret River area in Australia.

Dessert was a parfait of honey and cinnamon, plus a gingerbread wafer, and a selection of homemade cookies and pralines to go with either the coffee, tea, or a snifter of brandy.

Dance music—disco, Latin, name it—was played and quite a number went to the parquet area to whirl, jump, or sashay with grace to the tunes. None was more spirited than the Marriott's GM Karl Hudson in his pinkish piña barong.

The next La Chaine dinner will see the induction of new members. It will be at the Marriott in March, and Karl is one of the inductees.

TERESING Mendezona and Iris Arcenas

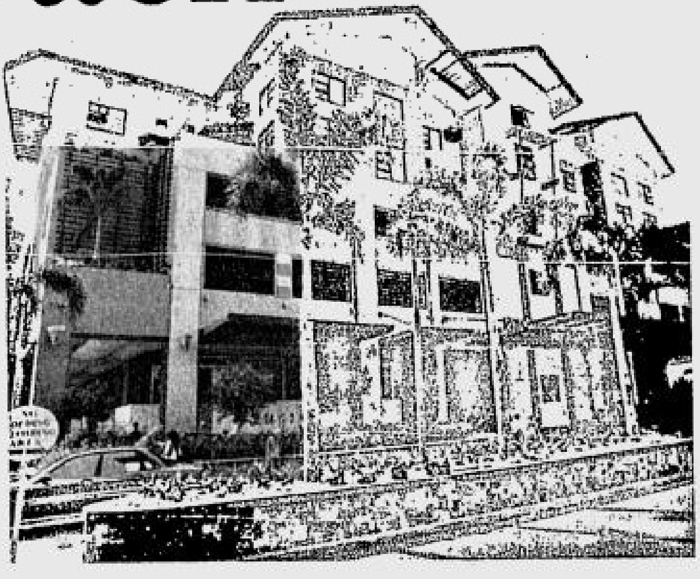
ROSEBUD and Choy Sala

DR. Vivina Chiu Yrastorza, Desmond Hatton

MICHEL and Amparito Lhuillier

Looking back

Greenbelt redux



A REVOLUTIONARY bid to move away from tried-and-tested retail designs to more novel inspirations has resulted in an oasis of lush greenery, good food, comfortable shopping, unique leisure opportunities and some of the cleanest, best-maintained real estate you will find in the country.

What was life like before Greenbelt 2 and 3? We can't even remember. All we know is a lot of us abandoned our old hangouts to settle comfortably into the many bars, restaurants and cafés that the renovated Greenbelt has to offer. The renovation gave us our first taste of Bubba Gump, our first drink at Temple Bar, our first dinner at Pepato, our first date at Kai. And for us nocturnal creatures, the late-night shows at the Greenbelt cinemas are a great blessing, too.

Most recently, the luxury brand stores found new homes in Greenbelt 4. Gucci, Louis Vuitton, YSL, Bottega Venetta, Tods found good company in one another in what may be the toniest address in town.

US-based international research and education organization gave Greenbelt the Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence.

Meteoric F4

LOVE 'em or hate 'em, but the Taiwanese boy band F4 (Jerry Yan, Vic Zhou, Ken Zhu and Vanness Wu) was the most pervasive lifestyle force of 2003. The biggest foreign pop-music act in the Philippines since the Beatles, F4 dominated the entertainment media with a record-breaking soap opera ("Meteor Garden" I and II), music video (the mammoth F4 hit "Can't Lose You" has just been named No. 1 music video of the year while the rival MTV has been forced to come up with F4 specials to beat the competition), hit albums (either as a group or a solo) and movies (Vanness Wu in "Star Runner").

The group is the Asian face of Pepsi while Jerry Yan, the most popular member, became Bench's newest image model. Both the upper and lower classes forked out P5,000 to P10,000 to buy tickets to the band's sold-out concerts in September, November and December. People made money from F4 merchandise such as posters, T-shirts, mugs and, would you believe, F4 diapers?

Along the way, F4 recast the way Filipinos do things. The Oriental look—slink eyes, Siberia-white skin, animé features—became the vogue. Because the F4 sported mopheads like the Beatles during their time, Pinoys let their hair down. Television programming gave choice slots to the "Chinovela" (Chinese TV serial "novels"). Videoke fanatics, who would usually out-Sinatra the chairman of the board himself in singing "My Way," began doing Taiwanese songs even if they couldn't understand one word in the lyrics. And anti-Sinoy sentiment, owing to the Sinoy community's formidable financial clout, simmered down.

Certain sectors seethed. Bratty rich kids scoffed at the F4 music, and TV and concert critics protested the Taiwanese invasion as economic sabotage. But F4 couldn't have made things worse. The brats scorned the "Oh baby, baby, my baby, baby" refrain of "Can't Lose You," but sang the inane "Sing, Sing" lyrics of the All-American Rejects, one of those predictable products of in-your-face, boorish Americana. F4 may be bubble gum pop, but they could sing and perform well. They were prompt and professional in their concerts and public appearances. And they got great hair!

Going for the shuttlecock

MANY people whipped out their rackets from their dusty attics. A number rushed to sports shops to buy new ones. No one really talked about it—it was like everyone woke up with a sudden itch to play badminton.

Soon, courts were popping up everywhere. And those that were already in operation were so full of people you had to book appointments weeks in advance.

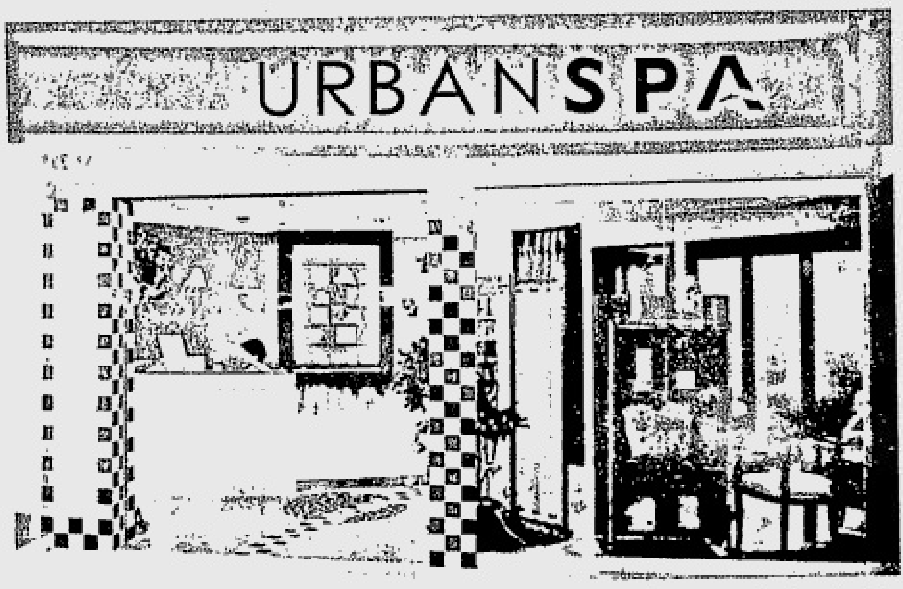
People played before and after work, some even during breaks. Forget basketball, badminton was 2003's favorite pastime.

Boobs tube

TELEVISION became a ballroom for risqué dancing. The trend was started by the 20-year-old noontime GMA-7 show "Eat Bulaga" when it regularly featured a bevy of nubile dancers known provocatively as the Sex Bomb Dancers.

The group quickly spawned copycats, such as the Viva Hot Babes on the rival TV network ABS-CBN, and inspired a TV-crazy nation to pick up their feet, don spaghetti straps and dance the "Ispageti," a sort of lambada dance minus the passion or the flair, but with plenty of the bawdy prurience. Even kids danced it in school programs under the approving gaze of school principals, and geriatric women performed it during the Santo Niño and Obando street dances.

When the Sunday ABS-CBN show "ASAP" featured a dance contest in which sex-siren wannabe's outdid one another in sex-bop calisthenics, the conquest of television was complete. TV became a daily, non-stop honky-tonk, never mind if the kids were watching. The boob tube became a tube of boobs.



A WHOLE LOT OF SPAS GOING UP

Gone are the days when we had to sweet talk our loved ones into giving us massages. Now, we can head out to the neighborhood spa for an hour or so of vigorous kneading, stretching, reflexing and relaxing. Even hands and feet have been getting extra-pampering at specialized spas.

SLOW Food Movement organizers in RP include Leny de Borja, Luigi Bernas, Jessie Sincioco, Gaita Fores, Mara Pardo de Tavera, Pia Lim-Castillo, Ed Quimson and Ipat Luna.

Food, food, glorious food

IN 2003 raw food, organic food and slow food got more exposure and following.

Unprocessed fruits, sprouted seeds, vegetables, nuts and other totally natural ingredients make up the raw food or sunfood diet.

Believing that cooked food loses life-sustaining vitamins and nutrients, raw food advocates eat only plant-based foods in their raw state. Raw food cuisine is by no means unexciting. The Farm at San Benito, in Lipa City, Batangas is one place that serves uncooked appetizers, entrées and desserts. Un-cooking classes are even taught there.

UNCOOKED food served at San Benito Farm.

Organic food, on the other hand, enjoyed a steady rise in sales, benefiting both organic farmers and organic food lovers.

Sales of organic foods were projected to reach $13 billion in 2003, according to the Organic Trade Association of the United States. Consumption of organic milk and cream rose even at premium prices, making food industry leaders take a second look at the organic food market.

Organic food traders here have found viable markets at several points in the metro, specifically the weekend markets at the Podium, Greenbelt, the Fort, not to mention. G & D Organic Haven in QC is a green supermarket selling shampoos alongside organic vegetables and grains.

Like the raw food devotees, organic advocates often describe themselves as part of a socially conscious movement to "reconnect with the food chain and support unadulterated, more traditional sources of food that they perceive helps, not hurts, the environment."

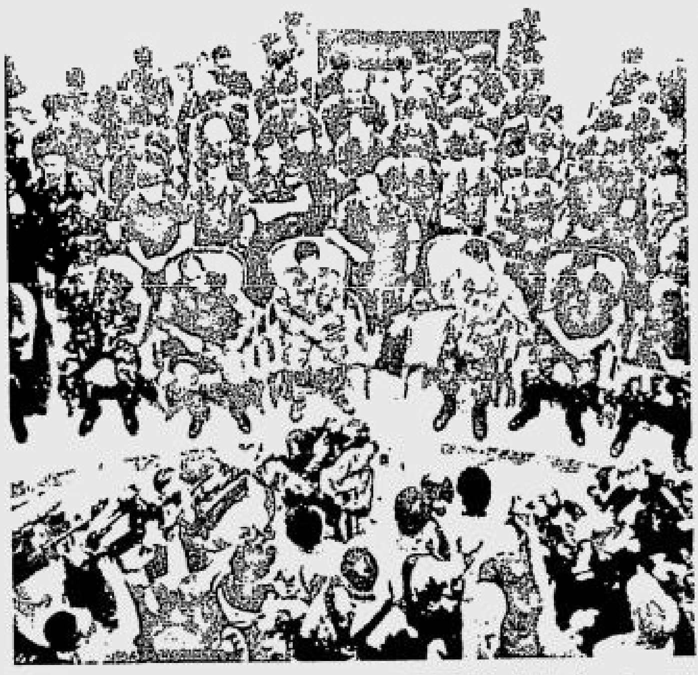
Meanwhile, a group of chefs and foodies launched the Slow Food Manila Convivium last year, "dedicated to preserving and supporting traditional ways of growing, producing and preparing food."

The international movement Slow Food was founded in Italy in 1986 as a reaction to the opening of an American hamburger fast-food shop in the country that year. It took seven years and a few good men and women before the Philippine chapter could take wing, but its formal launch at the Top of the City at the Citibank Tower was celebrated with the pleasures of well-prepared and homemade dishes.

What is Slow Food all about? It is a return to a way of doing things with more time and care: "Fruits and vegetables are best when they are ripened according to the laws of nature, animals must be reared humanely and without the aid of toxics and manipulations that are hostile to the living soil and natural cycles, dishes should be cooked and savored leisurely."

Raw food, organic food or slow food—all this is thanks to a growing perception among consumers that their bodies deserve better, if not the best.

Mutiny with no bounty



WHAT makes overworked and underpaid public school teachers different from disgruntled military men? The latter can pick up their guns anytime to get themselves heard.

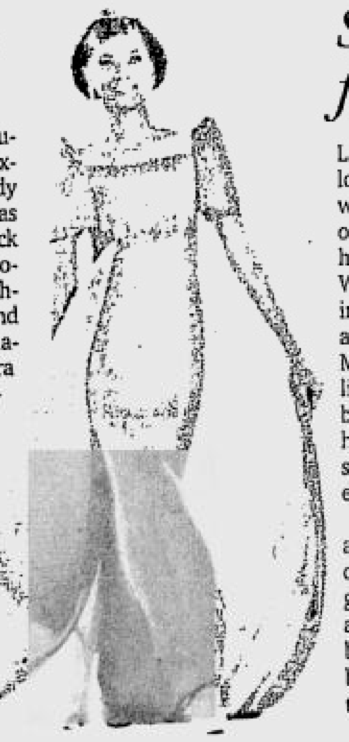
The failed mutiny by a group of young officers and soldiers at the Oakwood Premier in July showed how guns were more effective than roses in airing complaints and commanding full 20-hour media coverage.

Whether their reasons were noble or not, the Magdalo group, in attempting a power grab, reversed whatever gains the country had made economically. It also gave President Macapagal-Arroyo an excuse to reverse her decision not to seek a full six-year term come May 2004.

Of course, such consequences did not seem important as CNN beamed to the rest of the world the siege at the luxury-serviced suites. To the Oakwood employees, what was paramount was the safe evacuation of their guests to other hotels. Guns were powerless against their dedication and quiet heroism.

In the end, the soldiers gave up and were soon forgotten. Just like the rest of the nation.

Turn of the terno

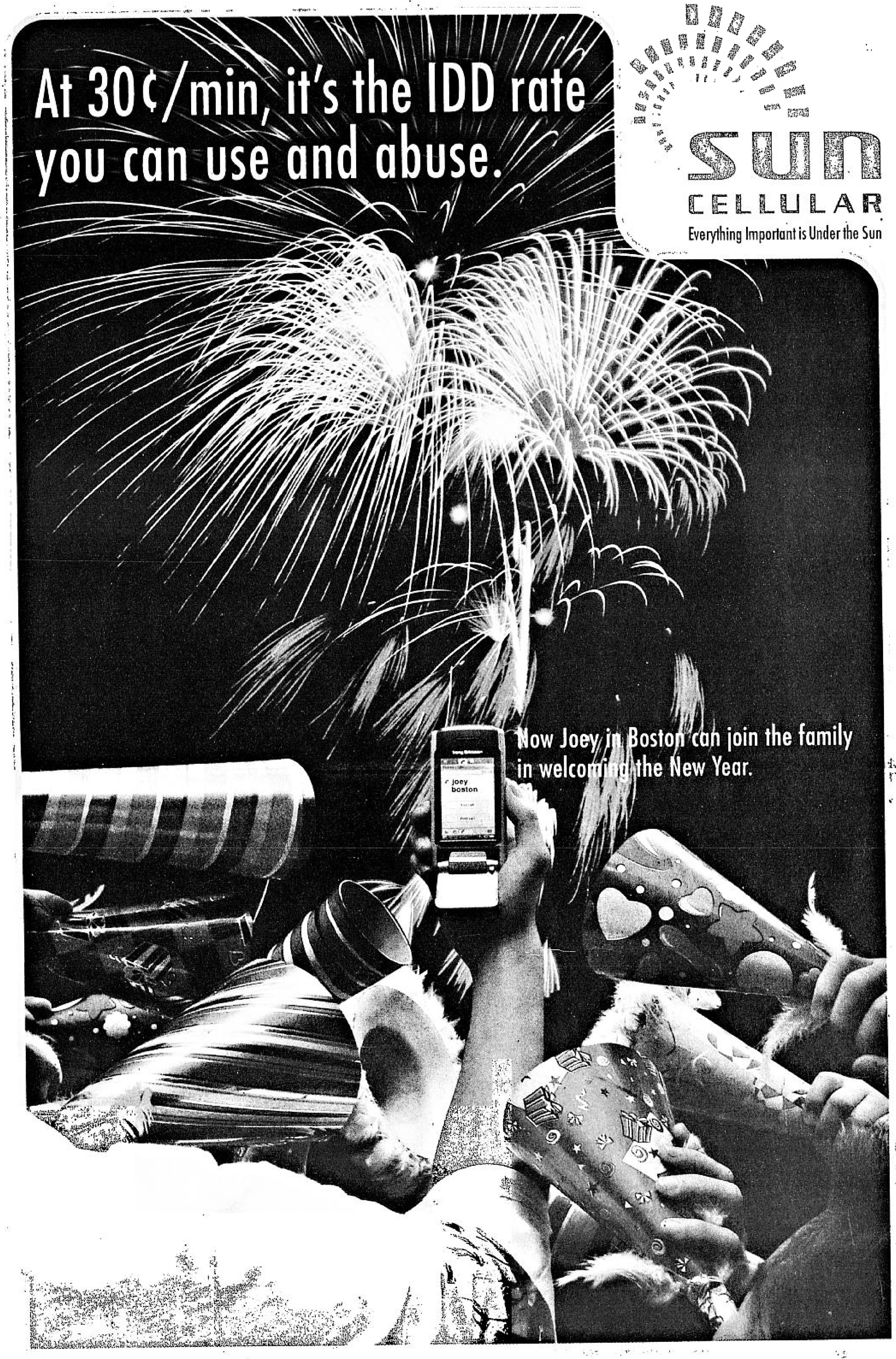


LONG shunned for its unfortunate association with the excesses of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, the terno has made a smashing comeback this year via a number of retrospectives and tributes that highlighted its timeless appeal and historical significance as a national dress. The Ramon Valera exhibit at the National Museum and the Tribute to Joe Salazar at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, which is highlighted by an ongoing retrospective terno exhibit, have included a number of dazzling terno creations that speak volumes about the Filipino's inherent sense of elegance and love for glamour.

Suckers for lipo

LIPOSUCTION, for the longest time a dark secret of women who dared to get rid of their flab, became a household word this year. Women, and men, are saying it's not about vanity; it's all about fitness. The Belo Medical Group popularized liposuctions by giving freebies to movie stars who have to keep their bods in shape, then introduced other fat-zappers.

For the first time, people are more open about acquiring and spending for a good body. Those who can afford didn't stop at the fatbusters. They went for botox as well, and other anti-aging technologies.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SIBLING fashion statement. Kidlat cast, Gela Laurel and her brother, Rajo Laurel

Belly-dancing for a Christmas party

TESSA!

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

WELCOME, 2004! It's the fourth day of the new year and so far, I have already broken several of my New Year's resolutions, starting with being on time.

Since I am perpetually late, I try every year to improve on my tardiness record, but alas, everyone from my high school teachers onwards knows this has proven to be too much of a challenge. I have opted this year to at least reduce my average time delay to an hour instead of two. Of course, this does not include the 15-minute courtesy allowance normally given, so my new maximum target is not more than an hour and fifteen.

Ironically, one of my favorite Christmas gifts is an antique pendulum "Grandfather" clock, given by a contractor friend, **Teng Ponco** of Cardrian Builders. On a recent trip to Florence, he spotted this in an antique shop near Basilica Santa Croce and thought it would be perfect in my house. He is a collector and wanted to share his hobby with me, or perhaps hopefully just get me to our meetings on time! He says his collection keeps him on track of time and deadlines, which are the waterloo of most contractors.

My nose should be as long as Pinocchio's, because I like to text that I am five minutes away when in fact, I am usually just getting out of Emphasis Salon. Well, please understand that it takes a major effort to look like a princess in fairyland. This transformation virtually ensures a grand-but-late entrance, two or three hours into any event.

I had a Christmas dinner party last month, everyone came fashionably late at 10 p.m., perhaps to give me the proverbial dose of my own medicine.

BELLY-DANCING/ D2

PRETTY and young with glitter tattoos. Cristina Soriano, Thea Jacinto and Natasha Drilon

HOLIDAY faces. Dennis Valdes, Emily Siy, best hip dancer Anton Barretto and Rosan Cruz

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P'wede ka pa ring
magwagi!
Ihabol na ang entries para sa
Jan. 22 Grand Draw!

Per DOH-BFAD Permit No 0920 s 2003

THE BELLY goddess herself, Gina Jean Grey

MY fave artsy couple in authentic gear. Tootie and Norman Crisologo

THE TURKS have arrived. Miguel Pastor and Ben Chan

GYPSY princess Celine Lopez and Moroccan-looking DJ Montano

SHANGHAI couple goes Middle Eastern. Tony and Wendy Hotung

KIDLAT! Funny group Vannie Liwanag, Dona Tumacder, David Esteban, Gela Laurel and Monica Llamas

Belly-dancing for a Christmas party

PHOTOS BY JUN CAPULONG

A YOGA Christmas at Bela Lipat's (in red) with my Santa bikini outfit, and birthday lunch of Jon-Jon Rufino (seated)

ALL decked out with beads, bangles and Flamenco accessories at the belly-dancing Christmas lunch

From page D1.

However, that was actually perfect timing for dinner, entertainment and games afterwards. The theme was Arabian nights with exposed bellies. Caftans, rubies, flying carpets and turbans were all part of the scene. My numerous accessories were laid out at the entrance, for those who wanted to enhance their harem-guest look.

Once adorned with all the trinkets and robes, I had them photographed by INQUIRER ace photog **Jun Capulong,** best known for his signature angular stance, bent sideways from the hip. Studio 88 also did digital photos of the guests, thereafter transferring the images into personalized coffee mugs for giveaways. Completing the ambience-providing crew was tattoo artist **Doji,** who applied handmade glitter tattoos on the guests' most exotic body parts.

Arabian Nights

I chose the Arabian Nights theme because of my new passion, belly-dancing. Of course, I am still so much into my yoga classes with **Bela Lipat,** which keeps me focused from within. But belly-dancing classes with **Gina Jean Grey** allows me to express my exotic emotions, while (more importantly) getting to use all my bangles and other accessories. I think it was the element of jiggling beads combined with her intense, passionate energy that lured me into Gina J's class.

If my yoga group's post-class, Christmas party was devoid of any accessories except my Christmas bikini outfit trimmed with white fur, then my belly class party was the total opposite. Everyone was decked out with more ornaments than most Christmas trees. After a sumptuous lunch of Middle Eastern cuisine, each belly-dancer/classmate did either a belly or Flamenco move before getting her exchange gift. Teacher Gina J had the best moves, but **Maryanne Lumen** was no slouch when it came to shaking those curves.

BELLY princess with Gift Gate's Virgie Ramos and her "Thou Shall Spend" bag

But I've digressed again, so let me segue back to the Arabian harem scene, where you can see how nicely I tie all this back together. I had asked Gina J to come and get my fashionable but stiff-hipped friends to wiggle and roll their bellies. As she got most of the female guests to move, the improv group Kidlat got the rest into an interactive comedy skit, led by their Happy Aladdin guru, **David Esteban.** Laughter is truly the best cure to release all holiday blues.

Our yearly tradition of exchange gifts was something to awake the senses. **Ricky Toledo** and **Chito Vijandre** of Firma Makati, who looked so royal in their Afghan silk robes, had the most sensuous gift, bottled honey powder. The jar came with a feather brush, to be used in spreading the edible honey. Now that will surely wake up the senses and more.

TURKISH "fez" hat on Keren Pascual

My fave big-biz friend, **Ben Chan,** brought 2004 calendar posters of F4's **Jerry Yan** aside from his exchange gift. I am just so happy with the boa, feathered shawl from Xavier Shop, Shanghai that Ben got me, so I didn't even notice the calendars. **Miguel Pastor** and Ben were also dressed in Moroccan outfits, complete with those cute Turkish hats, which I believe is called a fez. Great Scrabble word!

All-Mediterranean

Big-hearted queen of happiness, **Virgie Ramos,** came in all-Mediterranean colors, with a matching gold bag which read, "Thou shall spend!" At her all-white, Swatch Christmas party, she even had a snow machine drop faux snowflakes over the white, giant Christmas tree in the middle of the Glorietta mall. When I grow up, I want to have a budget like hers whenever I host a party. There is nothing like a VSR-hosted party.

The best, belly-shaking hip movement among the men was by **Anton Barretto.** His timing and gyration equal that of the gypsies themselves. He must have some Latino blood in him. Either that or he is just quivering with excitement from all the Cereo-scented candles he sold over the holidays.

The best holiday parties are those with raffle prizes for majority of the guests. This is a wonderful Filipino tradition, isn't it? It's even more wonderful when your name gets called for one of the grand prizes.

Two years in a row now, I have won airline tickets at the annual Christmas Party of **Robbie and Helen Delgado.** Last year, it was a business class ticket on Asiana Airlines to the States and this year, it was a Lufthansa ticket to Bangkok. Indeed, that is rare and I am truly lucky. If I three-peat next year, I suspect the Transnational Diversified Group might elevate me to their Raffle Hall of Fame, just to take me off the list and let others win.

For that party at the Tower Club, the theme was magic. **Paul Potassy,** an old-school magician married to a lovely Pinay who hails from Baguio, entertained the guests with his unique blend of magic and hilarious sense of humor. Now if he can only shower his magic dust (actually he was just using salt!) on the whole country, we might have a fighting chance in 2004!

Well, so much for reminiscing about the holidays. That's one thing about us Filipinos, when it comes to Christmas partying, New Year partying or just any partying in general, no economic pall can dampen our spirits!

And that's the thought I'd like to leave all of you, my dear readers, as the last year ends and another tough one begins: let's all do our darndest to enjoy life. It's a helluva lot better than sticking our heads in the sand and crying that the end is near. As Filipinos, one thing we will always have is our festive spirit. Let that be the light that guides us through the darkness.

E-mail me at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph.

HAVE a belly-shaking, Turkish-delightful 2004

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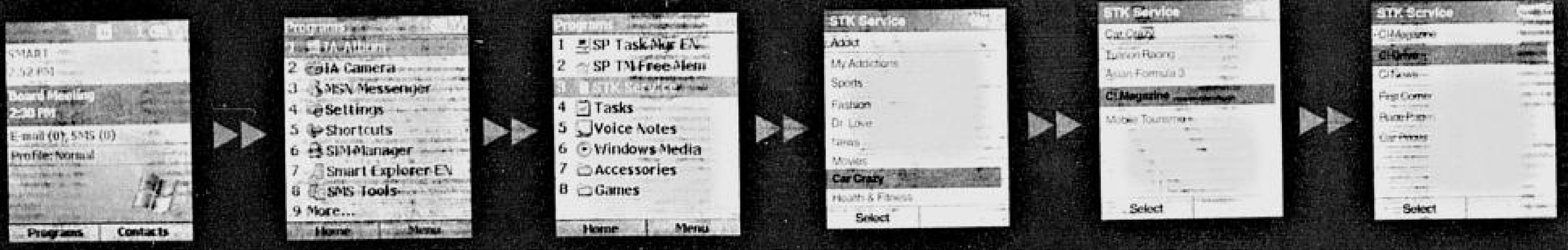

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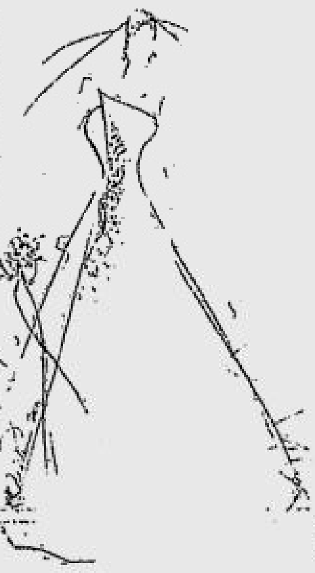
Milestones

We're accepting announcements of weddings and engagements. Please send the following typewritten information: names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, gown designer and other related information. Readers can send sketches of gowns and pictures of the couple to the INQUIRER *office, or P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City, or e-mail pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. This will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the sender.*



MATEO-ALVARO

Jowel Mateo, son of **Julian** and **Juanita Mateo**, married **Evangeline Alvaro**, daughter of **Graciano** and **Teresita Alvaro**, Dec. 28 at the Three Kings Parish Church, Nueve Ecija. **Paul Rex Mateo** of The Wedding Day designed the gown of the bride.

CARANDANG -MONTECER

Jason Carandang, son of **Leandro** and **Lucina Carandang**, will marry **Benchie Montecer**, daughter of **Norma Apayo vda. de Montecer**, on Jan. 18 at the San Vicente Parish Church, Lipa City.

DIVINAGRACIA-GAERLAN

Rico Philip Divinagracia exchanged vows with **Malyn Gaerlan** Dec. 17 at the San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila. Reception followed at Patio Victoria.

TALOSIG-VILLANUEVA

Jezzel Talosig exchanged vows with **Louise Villanueva** Nov. 29 at the Manila Cathedral. Reception followed at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

NATORES-RELUCIO

Mah-jo Z. Natores exchanged vows with **Melani S. Relucio** Dec. 7 at the Church of Transfiguration, Caleruega, Batulao, Batangas. Reception followed at the Tagaytay International Convention Center.

YEO-TANG

Jerry Ramon Sy Yeo exchanged vows with **Cassandra Chua Tang** Dec. 13 at the Malate Catholic Church (Our Lady of Remedies Parish). Reception followed at the Grand Ballroom of The Century Park Hotel.

REICHMAN-SANTOS

Peter Reichman exchanged vows with **Wilma Santos** Dec. 22 at the San Agustin Church. Reception followed at Shangri-la Makati.

ROBLES-GIONGCO

Leo V. Robles will exchange vows with **Katherine C. Giongco** Jan. 5 at St. James The Great in Alabang, Muntinlupa. Reception will follow at The Palms Country Club. Both bride and groom are based in Los Angeles, California.

SAYAS' 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Aton and **Felising Sayas** will celebrate their golden anniversary with a thanksgiving Mass today at the San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa City.

JABIEN-PAREJA

Ricster Jabien, son of **Esterlita vda. de Jabien**, will exchange vows with **Robee Pareja**, daughter of **Gavino** and **Rosario Pareja**, on Jan. 10 at the San Isidro Cathedral in Malaybalay, Bukidnon. Reception will follow at Loiza's Garden. The bride will wear an off-shoulder beaded gown designed by **Rowena Rallos**.

BALDOVINO-CRUZ

Dr. Rudiger Baldovino, son of **Rodolfo** and **Rosalinda Baldovino**, will marry **Cristina Cruz**, daughter of **Onofre** and **Elvira Cruz**, on Jan. 28 at the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Bulacan. Reception will be at the Hiyas ng Bulacan Convention Center.

ALCAZAR-PENTINIO

Maryanne Pentinio, daughter of **Edmundo** and **Teresita** Pentinio, exchanged vows with **Lawrence Alcazar**, son of **Severino** and **Herminia Alcazar**, Dec. 8 at the Basilica of the Immaculate Concepcion (Manila Cathedral). The bride wore a haltered, embroidered and beaded princess-cut gown in piña jusi with a detachable beaded train.

REMPILLO-VENTURANZA

Mira Grace Venturanza, daughter of Mr. and Ms **Romualdo Venturanza**, exchanged vows with **Oliver Rempillo**, son of Mr. and Ms Rempillo, Dec. 14 at the Coral Tree Garden, QC. The bride wore a **Joel Bautista** gown.

CALSO-CACHO

Jerome Calso, son of **Theoderico** and **Aurelia Calso**, exchanged vows with Dr. **Maricar Cacho**, daughter of judge **Pedro** and **Marina Cacho**, Dec. 30 at the St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Baguio City. Reception followed at Le Soufflé, Camp John Hay. **Rene de la Rosa** made the gowns of the bride and entourage

FLORENCIO-DE LOS SANTOS

Rafael Florencio, son of **Corazon** and **Renato Florencio**, exchanged vows with **Katrina de los Santos**, daughter of **Rosario** and **Apolinario de los Santos III**, Dec. 11 at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Makati. Reception was at Le Soufflé, The Fort, Makati.

Parkinsons support group meet

THE PARKINSON'S Support Group of the Philippines (PSGP) Foundation will hold its next meeting on Jan. 4 at 12 noon at the 14th floor auditorium of the Cathedral Heights Building Complex (CHBC) South Tower of St. Luke's Medical Center. The meeting, sponsored by Servier Philippines, is free and open to the public.

The PSGP is a registered non profit organization. Founded in 1999, it aims to provide families and patients with Parkinson's Disease, Parkinsonism, tremor, dystonia, and other movement disorders with information about their affliction. Its founding chairwas the late former Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez.

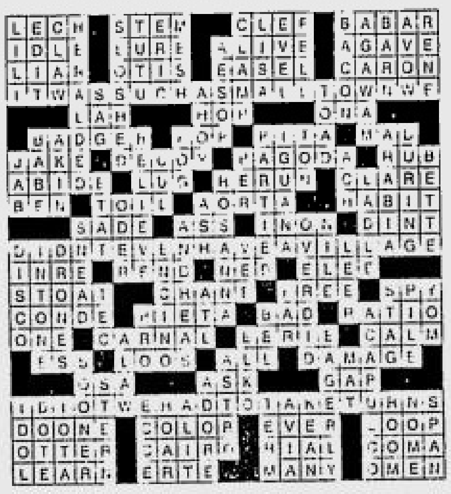
Topics to be discussed include the latest data on gene theraphy for Parkinson's, and upcoming drugs in the market, and ongoing drugs studies. An open forum will follow.

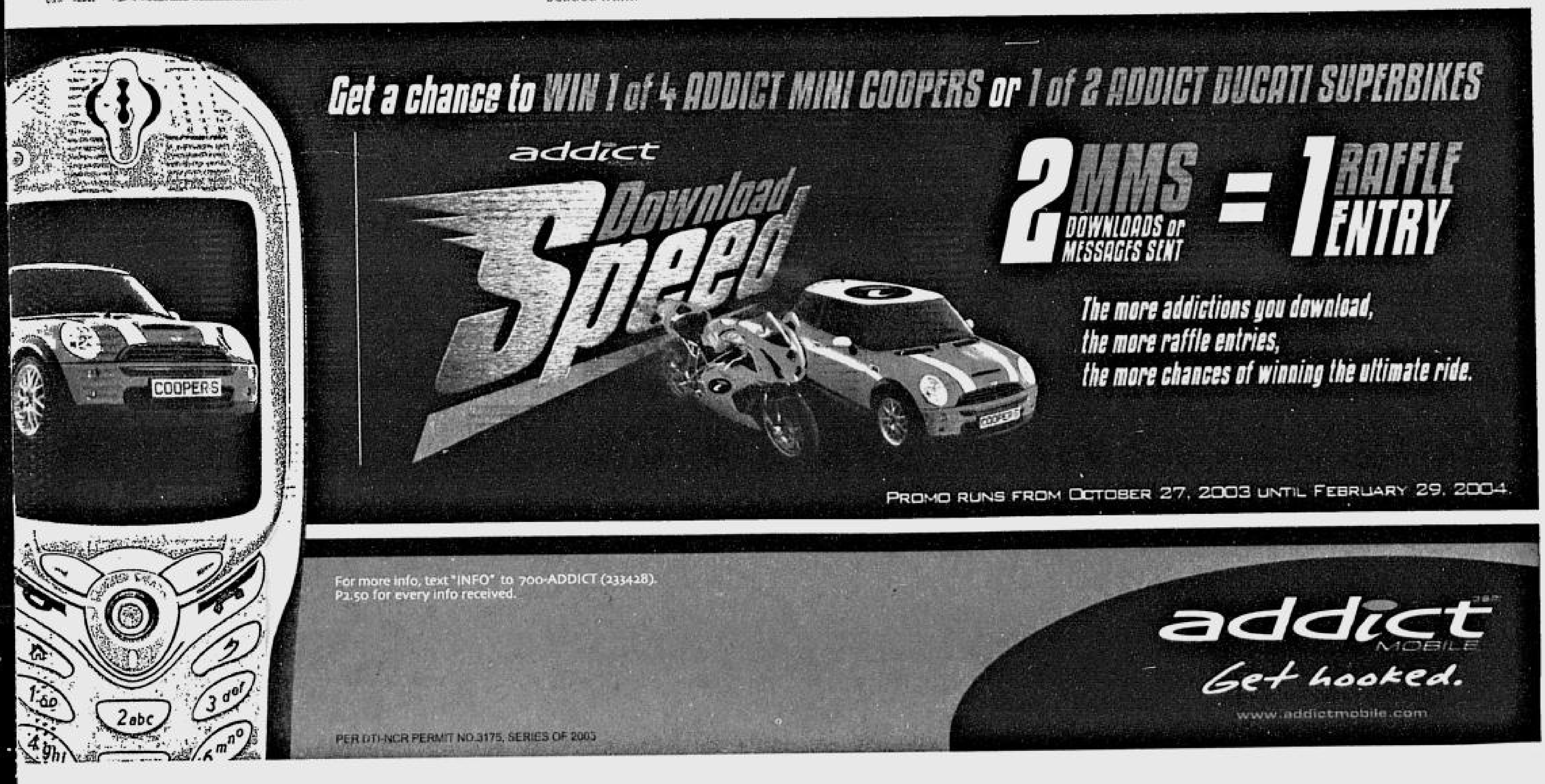
Call the Movement Disorders Center of St. Luke's 7230301 local 3101 or 7275552.

PAGTAKHAN-ORCULLO

Charisma Orcullo, daughter of **Roberto** and **Corazon Orcullo**, exchanged vows with **Francis Pagtakhan**, son of **Mati** and **Thelma Pagtakhan**, Dec. 20 at the Our Lady of Fatima Church, Kawit, Cavite. Reception followed at Jardin de San Antonio. **Paul Rex Mateo** designed the gowns of the bride and her entourage.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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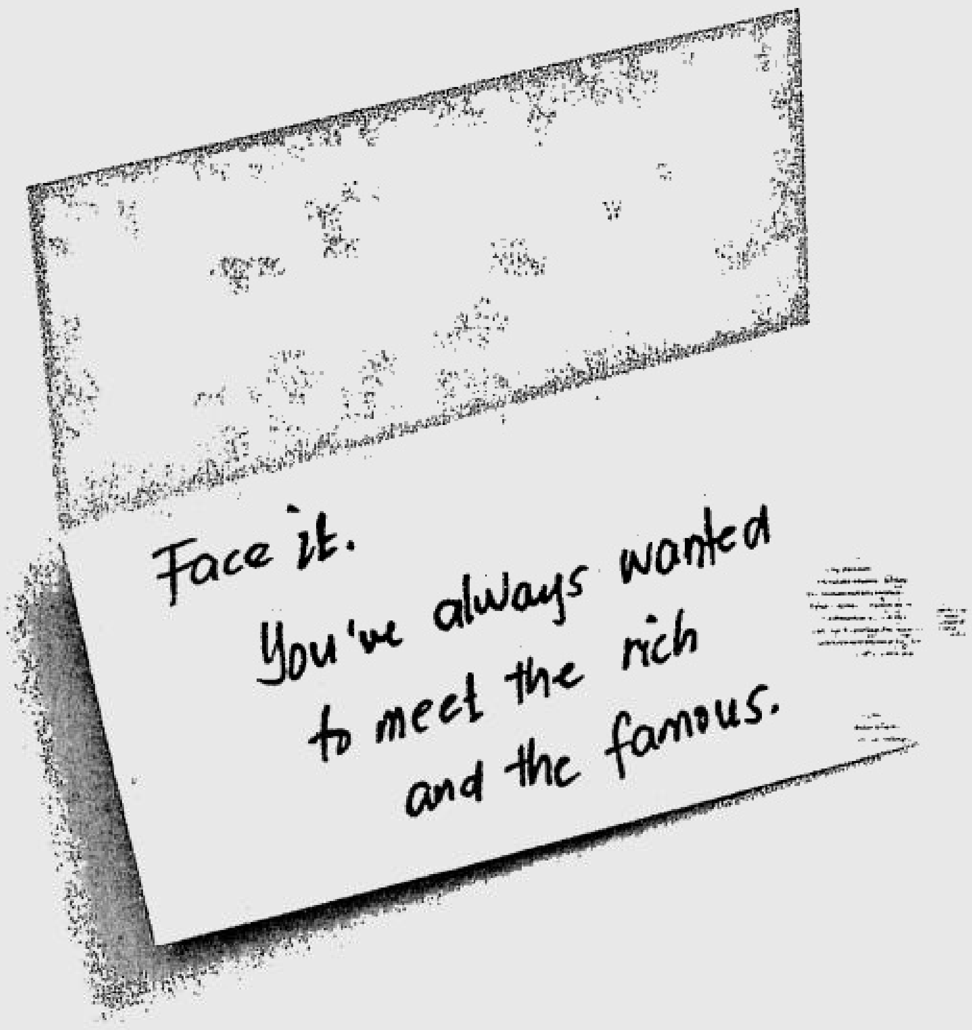
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OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT
on Page E7

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ACCOUNT ASSOCIATES
- Will be responsible in assisting Account Officer in servicing of accounts and handling of the documentation of accounts
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Must possess good analytical skills; good communication skills; highly developed interpersonal skills and a high sense of responsibility

ACCOUNT OFFICER – Corporate Banking (Binondo)
- Will be responsible in evaluating and recommending Credit facilities/loan proposals. Candidates will also market and manage borrowing clients' availments, collections and accommodations of credit facilities
- Minimum 3 years experience as Corporate Account Officer in any Commercial/Universal Bank

ACCOUNT OFFICER – Acquired Assets (Cebu)
- Will be responsible in the marketing and selling of all industrial and agricultural ROPOA assets
- Graduate of any 4 year business course, preferably Marketing
- Must have experience in conducting market/feasibility studies
- Good communications and negotiation skills

ACCOUNT OFFICER – Consumer Loans (Calamba/Lipa, Davao, Iloilo, San Fernando, Pampanga)
- Will be responsible in loan processing for auto, housing and salary
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Minimum 2 years experience as a Consumer Account Officer

BRANCH CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSOCIATE
- Will be responsible in client/account servicing in the branch
- Open to recent graduates of any 4 year business course

BRANCH SALES ASSOCIATE
- Will be responsible for handling and processing account opening, and other bank products
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Minimum 1 year bank experience in Branch Operations

BRANCH SALES SPECIALIST
- This is an entry position eventually leading to Sales Officership. Qualified candidates will undergo classroom and on the job training involving field sales calls, sales planning, prospecting, appointment getting and presentation. Candidates are expected to attain targets for number of sales calls, accounts opened and volume of funds generated.
- Graduate of any 4 year course with strong inclination and high aptitude for sales

BRANCH SALES OFFICER
- Will be responsible in account solicitation for the branch and assisting in the servicing and maintenance of existing account holders
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Minimum 2 years experience in a Sales/Marketing function in a bank or any financial institution
- Good communication skills

BRANCH SERVICE HEAD
- Will be responsible for the over-all Branch Operations
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Minimum 2 years experience as Branch Operations Officer or have handled both Branch Cashier and Branch Accountant positions in any Commercial/Universal Bank

CALL CENTER ASSOCIATE
- Will be responsible in servicing incoming calls of the Call Center
- Highly developed English verbal and written communications skills
- Proficiency in Filipino verbal communication skills
- Banking experience and ability to speak Chinese will be an advantage

COLLECTIONS ASSOCIATE (Cebu)
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Good communications skills
- Must know how to drive a motor vehicle
- Experience in collections will be an advantage

DEALER COORDINATOR (Calamba/Lipa, Davao, Iloilo, San Fernando, Pampanga)
- Will be responsible in soliciting auto loan applications from various Car Dealers
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Good communications skills
- Experience in auto loans marketing/operations will be an advantage

LIBRARIAN/RECEPTIONIST
- Graduate of BS Library Science
- Experience in administrative and librarian functions is preferred

MARKETING ASSOCIATE
- Will be responsible in handling the documentation of sale of acquired assets and in carrying out of marketing activities of the Chattel Disposal team
- Graduate of any 4 year business course
- Work experience in a similar field will be an advantage

TRUST OFFICER (AM-M)
- Will be responsible for delivery of major projects to ensure achievement of the Trust Center's strategic objectives. These projects will involve significant changes in the organization's practices, have an element of complexity, and will be cross functional in nature. Key responsibilities include project management, product development, portfolio management, and business development.
- Well versed in portfolio management and trust operations
- Possess in-depth knowledge of trust rules and regulations
- Possess a track record of managing projects that have a strategic impact on business
- MBA and/or CFA qualifications preferred

TREASURY OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (TODP) TRAINEE
- Will undergo extensive training on all Treasury Operations processes and flow; Qualified Trainees will become Treasury Officers after completion of (1) one year training program
- Graduate of any 4 year business course; with good scholastic records
- Must possess good analytical skills; good communication skills; highly developed interpersonal skills and a high sense of responsibility

Be a part of a company with Global Standards, currently being benchmarked in Service & Competence.

Interested parties are requested to send their comprehensive resumés to any of the addresses below with a 2x2 photo attached.

(POSITION APPLIED FOR)
International Exchange Bank
Recruitment & Placement Sector
4/F iBank Exchange Building, 142 Amorsolo St.
Legaspi Village, Makati City

E-mail address: jobs@ibank.com.ph

Visit our Website at *www.ibank.com.ph*

TeleTech™

TeleTech, the leading provider in global customer care solutions for over 20 years is seeking exceptional Call Center Professionals for our Manila Call Center Operations. With global infrastructure support, our operations service broad range of North American clients. The depth of the organization offers the right person the potential to learn, develop and advance their career.

Essential requirements for all roles include 4-year College Degree, Exceptional English Conversational skills and a willingness to work night shift.

We are undergoing rapid expansion!
Start your year with a new career!

We offer attractive remuneration and incentives commensurate with your experience. Kindly indicate in the envelope the position you are applying for and send your application to:

MS. ROSALINA HALILI
Office Manager
TeleTech Customer Care Management Philippines, Inc.
P.O. Box 1786 MCPO Makati City, Philippines

Or thru the following e-mail addresses:
1. Regional Director of Training & Quality Position- tqdirector@ph.teletech.com
2. Site Director Position- SITEDIRECTOR@ph.teletech.com
3. HR Director Position- hrjobs@ph.teletech.com
4. Operations Manager, Team Leader positions: OPSjobs@ph.teletech.com
5. Trainer Position and Training Manager - trainerjobs@ph.teletech.com
6. Quality Assurance Mgr., Supervisor and Specialist positions: QA_jobs@ph.teletech.com
7. Workforce Planning Manager, Specialist and Payroll Supervisor Positions: OSCjobs@ph.teletech.com
8. Account Manager - CRMjobs@ph.teletech.com
9. Finance Manager - financemanager@ph.teletech.com

t t e c

REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF TRAINING AND QUALITY
- College degree in related field, Master's degree preferred.
- Demonstrated effective Leadership capabilities across multiple teams in various locations
- Proven ability of linking training effectiveness to employee performance.
- Outstanding project management capabilities
- Comprehensive knowledge of quality assurance practices and processes.
- Ability to influence key stakeholders in relation to Training and Quality initiatives.

ACCOUNT MANAGER
- Exceptional communication skills within all levels of client organizations
- Ability to manage both external clients and internal teams
- Outstanding project management capabilities
- Proven experience working with a variety of clients
- Self driven, strong attention to detail
- Minimum 1 year Client Relationship experience
- Sense of Urgency is a must

TRAINERS
- Previous Training experience essential
- Exceptional presentation skills
- Ability to motivate trainees is a must
- Results focused and a desire to help others succeed
- Accent reduction training an advantage

PREVIOUS APPLICANTS
NEED NOT RE-APPLY
www.teletech.com

SITE DIRECTOR
- Exceptional communication skills
- Ability to manage both external and internal clients
- Outstanding project management capabilities
- Proven experience working with a variety of clients
- Self-driven, with strong attention to details
- Minimum 5 year Client Relationship experience
- Charismatic and dynamic leader
- At least 5 years broad-based business experience or Senior Management Level experience in the service sector and in · particular, technology, telecommunications environment
- Excellent organizational skills and able to manage multiple and changing priorities
- Sound financial planning skills a MUST

TEAM LEADERS
- Must have minimum of one year experience in a Team Leader role
- Exceptional Leadership and coaching skills
- Proven ability to motivate teams
- Experience in either sales, collections or inbound is a must

FINANCE MANAGER
- Certified Public Accountant; B/A or B/S degree in Accounting or Finance or equivalent business related experience.
- With extensive experience in Financial Accounting, Reporting and Control, Budget and Forecast preparation; Financial Statement Analysis: Financial Statement Ration Analysis, preferable gained from a multinational company
- Knowledge of Oracle Financials accounting system; Corporate Tax laws and in handling tax matters.
- Highly analytical, ability to maintain stability and deliver under pressure, results oriented and decisive.
- Has expressive and receptive communication skills.
- Must be able to work with all levels of management and interact effectively with all employees. Able to interact with vendors and clients on a regular basis and represent Teletech professionally at all times.

PAYROLL SUPERVISOR
Essential Requirements include:
- Minimum four years experience in payroll preparation, two years of which in a supervisory role
- Analytical, solutions focused
- Exceptional mathematical capabilities
- Working knowledge on payroll applications

WORKFORCE PLANNING MANAGER
- Previous extensive work force planning experience essential
- Analytical and Solutions Focused
- Proven management experience in a Call Center environment.· TCS V4, eWFM Series 5/6 or Blue Pumpkin experience an advantage

OPERATIONS MANAGER
- Outstanding influencing skills
- PRO ACTIVE go-getter
- Able to operate independently and in consultation with senior management
- Outstanding leadership ability
- Extensive experience in coaching, performance management
- Proven ability to achieve organizational goals

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER
- Minimum 1 year call center management experience
- Outstanding attention to detail
- Exceptional leadership skills
- Proven listening and Analytical skills
- Training and/or Six Sigma experience highly desirable

QUALITY ASSURANCE SUPERVISOR
- Min 1 year supervisory experience in a call center environment
- Exceptional program facilitation, coaching and feedback skills
- Good leadership skills· Experience in Training and Quality Assurance highly desirable

QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALISTS
- Minimum 6 months Call Center experience
- Outstanding attention to detail
- Exceptional Coaching and feedback skills
- Proven listening and Analytical skill

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
Essential requirements for this role include:
- College degree in related field, Master's degree preferred.
- Demonstrated effective leadership and direct management capabilities across multiple teams in various locations
- Minimum of 5 – 7 years of proven experience and knowledge in Philippine labor laws
- Demonstrated well-rounded experience in all facets of Human Resource Management

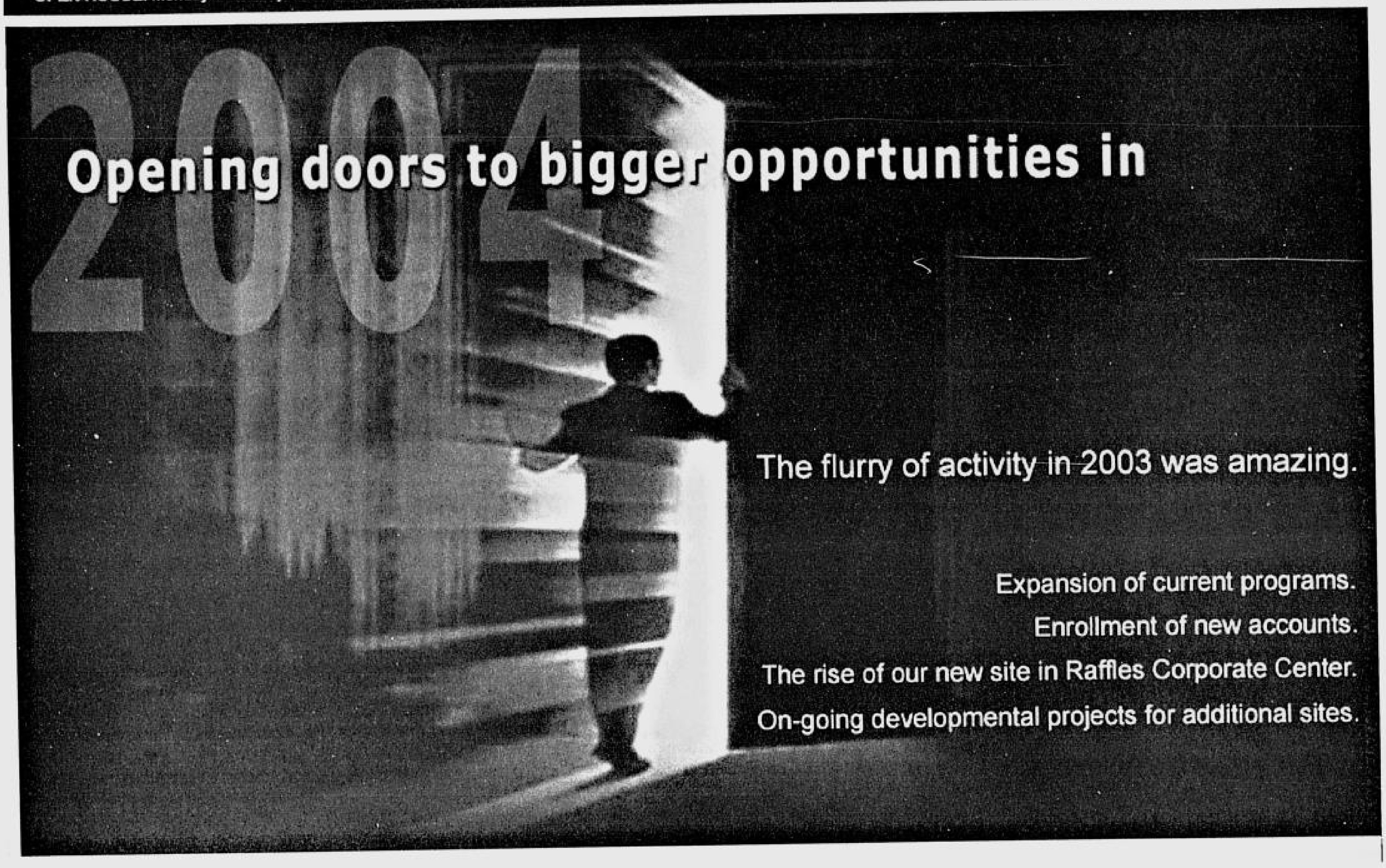
TRAINING MANAGER
- Demonstrated leadership skills
- Exceptional communication skills
- Courseware development and training needs analysis knowledge
- Strong understanding of training assessment and Return on Investment
- Knowledge of accent reduction training required.

WORKFORCE PLANNING SPECIALISTS
- 6 months call center experience
- Analytical Skills with attention to detail
- Exceptional mathematical capabilities
- Microsoft Excel experience advantageous

Ad by Adrian Aldaba

31/F Discovery Centre, 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600
JOBS HOTLINE 634.9440 loc. 1222
recruitment@ambergrissolutions.com
OPEN HOUSE: Mondays to Fridays 9am to 7pm

ambergris solutions



Opening doors to bigger opportunities in 2004

The flurry of activity in 2003 was amazing.

Expansion of current programs.
Enrollment of new accounts.
The rise of our new site in Raffles Corporate Center.
On-going developmental projects for additional sites.

Ambergris Solutions is a leading Philippine-based provider of offshore quality customer care services for American companies in the utilities, IT and telecommunications industries through local infrastructure. Our facilities, training and operations program and our highly trained professionals, make us the most admired, fastest growing Philippine-based company in the call center industry.

Ambergris is committed towards fostering and nurturing lasting relationships between our clients and their customers thru our pool of valuable resources --*people, technology, experience and capabilities*. We provide a full range of inbound customer care solutions to Fortune 500 companies from our state-of-the-art, 1500-seat contact center in Manila's Ortigas central business district. The Ambergris contact center, featured last year on CNBC Asia, employs cutting-edge Avaya and Cisco technology, and operates over a fully-rendundant, fully fibre-optical network. Ambergris has also developed Baleen ™, a proprietary, patent-pending performance management software solution that ensures our agents are carefully groomed to be at their peak performance 24/7.

Operations Managers
(Sales, Customer Service, Tech Support)

- Responsible for Managing the Program involving activities which contribute to the acquisition, satisfaction and retention of customers
- Candidate must have 2 to 3 years experience in a call center, managing an account with sales targets and deliverables for 150 agents.
- Exposed to client-relationship management.
- Competencies include but not limited to: Business Mastery, Strategic Planning, Report Analysis, Forecasting, Project Management, Organizational Leadership, Relationship Management, Multi-tasking exercises.
- Experience working in a high volume, inbound contact center environment, locally or abroad.
- Solid sales background in PC hardware.
- Strong orientation towards customer-service.
- Knowledge of PC hardware, networking, and technical troubleshooting.

Assistant Operations Managers/Shift Leaders

- Responsible for managing the customer-service and call center departments involving activities which contribute to the acquisition, satisfaction and retention of customers.
- Candidate must have 2 to 3 years experience in managing his/her own small business unit (with functional skills in Sales, Finance, HR and Operations).
- Exposed to client-relationship management, call center experience a big plus.

Team Captains

- The first line supervisor of a team of CIAs.
- Candidate must posses a minimum 1 year supervisory experience from any industry; call center experience is a big plus.
- Must be customer-service and/or sales oriented. Willing to work in shifts including graveyard.

Business Manager

- Responsible for all functions within the RMG (workforce management team), Reporting group, and POC Supervisor.
- Monitor center performance and work with the Core team to implement actions for continuous improvement.
- Determine appropriate goaling for all levels within the center with the overall objective of exceeding the nationally delivered center goal.
- Determine internal compensation and contest criteria based on call center objectives and budget restrictions.)
- Represent the center on numberous project related calls that may affect the center based on call type(s) handled.
- Provide headcount projections and recommendations to ensure actual headcount exceeds nationally delivered requirements.

AMBERGRIS ON THE RISE IN JANUARY 2004!

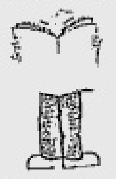
Ambergris Solutions kicks off the [illegible] year with a big bang by welcoming one of the biggest and most well-established telecommunications company in the [illegible]. Because of this we are currently in search of ambitious and promising individuals to be part of our dynamic team, who are willing to start on February.

We are looking for:

Assistant Operations Manager
Team Captains
350 Customer Interaction Agents
Workforce Specialist
Quality Assurance Analysts
Reports Analyst
Trainers

WANTED
MANAGER
For new Overseas Employment Office familiar with POEA Rules Extensive contact with Foreign Employers & OMDs necessary.
Contact Atty. Benjamin Rosales at 433-76-57 or 09178236495

Where you find the best.



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DERMATOLOGIST
OR ANY DOCTOR WITH DERMA AS A SPECIALTY
Female, not more than 30 yrs old, graduate of Medicine, specializing on Dermatology

MARKETING MANAGER
Female not more than 35 yrs old, graduate of Marketing or Business Mngt., 3yrs experience in brand management & marketing in a services company, can conceptualize & implement marketing activities, hands-on creative design.

STORE MANAGERS
Female 26-35 yrs old must be a graduate of BS Administration or Business Mngt courses, must have experience in operations preferably in a service industry; excellent communication & strong leadership skills

ACCOUNTING SUPERVISOR
Female, CPA, 25 to 28 yrs old must have 2-3 yrs related experience, highly proficient in system audit, must be able to set up an effective & efficient accounting department

SALES SUPERVISOR
Female, 25-30 yrs. old, graduate of any medical course, experience in sales in the same industry, must have good communication & interpersonal skills.

SALES CONSULTANTS
Female, 23-30 yrs. old, graduate of any medical course, w/ 1yr. experience in selling excellent communication skills w/ pleasing personality.

MASSAGE INSTRUCTORS
Male / Female not more than 35 yrs old graduate of Physical / Occupational therapy or any related course; must have DOH accreditation, willing to work full time

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES
Female, not more than 30yrs old, graduate of Marketing or Business Management aggressive with pleasing personality

THERAPISTS
Male / female, 23 - 30 yrs old, graduate of Physical / Occupational therapy or any medical course, excellent communication skills, must be customer service oriented / hardworking, willing to undergo extensive training

PLS. APPLY PERSONALLY AT 87 WEST AVE. Q.C. (corner Examiner st.)

tel. no.: 372-8910
E-MAIL ADDRESS: bioessence_hrd@yahoo.com

Oody's
RICE, NOODLES 'N BAR

We are currently expanding! We need top caliber individuals for the following positions:

OPERATIONS MANAGER

The successful candidate shall be tasked to oversee the Store Operations from sales generation, people management, operational systems and procedures, store maintenance and other concerns:

QUALIFICATIONS:

☐ Extensive experience in handling a chain of restaurants preferrably as Area Manager
☐ A team player with strong personality
☐ Capability of setting directions and a strong will to achieve performance targets.

BRANCH MANAGER

☐ Male or Female; not over 35 years old
☐ Graduate of any Business related course from a reputable school
☐ Preferably with at least 3 years experience in supervisory/ managerial position in similar operations
☐ Knowledge in formulating & implementing operating standards: systems and cost control
☐ Excellent communication skills and willing to work long hours.

DINING/KITCHEN SUPERVISORS

☐ Male/Female, not over 30 years old
☐ Graduate of HRM/HRA, Food Technology or any business related course with at least 3 years work experience gained from a bar & restaurant
☐ Honest with good working attitude and can manage people
☐ A team player with strong and pleasing personality, willing to work long hours
☐ Familiar in operation report like food, beverage and labor cost.

COOKS

☐ Male, not over 30 years old
☐ At least High School graduate
☐ 2 years experience in preparing Asian Cuisine gained from a fine dining restaurant
☐ Must be quality conscious, willing to be trained, and willing to work long hours.

The company offers an attractive compensation package for Operations and Branch Managers. Interested parties are advised to handcarry or send their resume with picture to:

The Human Resources Department
Cabalen Management Company, Inc
54 J.P. Rizal St., Brgy. Manlag Project 4, Q.C. E-mail: cmci@broline.com

Oody's Greenbelt 3
2nd Level Greenbelt 3,
Makati City

or

Oody's Robinson's Galleria
Level 2 East Wing
[illegible] Ortigas Center Pasig City

SM SUPERMALLS

METRO MANILA • MARILAO • LUCENA • PAMPANGA

WE ARE LOOKING...

for young, dynamic, management professionals who are customer-oriented and computer-literate with excellent communication skills to join our METRO MANILA, MARILAO, LUCENA & PAMPANGA team as:

MALL MANAGER
(MARILAO)

- Three years managerial experience in property management, building administration or mall operations
- Graduate of Engineering or Architecture, preferably licensed
- Must possess and display the right business sense and capabilities
- Has a keen eye for details

LEASING MANAGER
(PAMPANGA)

- With experience in property/tenant management, primarily tasked to scout prospective mall tenants and processing of lease approvals; monitors areas for lease
- Graduate of any four-year course; background in Marketing, Operations or Accounting will be a plus

MARKETING MANAGERS
(MARILAO/LUCENA)

- One year managerial experience in marketing management, advertising, promotions and events
- Graduate of Marketing, Communication Arts, Fine Arts or any related four-year course

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION/TENANT RELATION OFFICERS/RESIDENT ENGINEER
(METRO MANILA/PAMPANGA)

- With experience in property development and/or building administration, maintenance of building amenities, utilities and equipment
- Graduate of Mechanical/Electrical/Civil Engineering/Architecture, preferably licensed

MARKETING OFFICERS
(METRO MANILA/PAMPANGA)

- One year work experience in multimedia, advertising, promotions and events in a supervisory capacity
- Graduate of Marketing, Communication Arts, Fine Arts or any related four-year course
- Innovative, modern, resourceful and sensitive to market trends

ACCOUNTING OFFICERS
(METRO MANILA)

- Certified Public Accountant
- Two years supervisory experience, preferably with auditing background

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANTS
(METRO MANILA)

- Graduate of BS Accountancy
- Female

Interested applicants may send resume with 2"x 2" recent ID picture

Metro Manila
THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
SHOPPING CENTER MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
SM Corporate Offices, Bldg. B
1000 Bay Blvd., Central Business Park
Bay City, Pasay City
or e-mail:hr@smsupermalls.com

Lucena
THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
SHOPPING CENTER MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
Maharlika Highway cor. Dalahican Road
Red-V, Lucena City

Marilao
THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
SHOPPING CENTER MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
Km. 21 Mc Arthur Highway, Bgy. Ibayo
Marilao, Bulacan

Pampanga
THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
SHOPPING CENTER MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
SM City Pampanga, Mall Administration
Office, Barangay San Jose,
City of San Fernando

BUSINESS PROCESSES OPERATION

NEW YORK TELECON

ACCOUNT MANAGER

- With salary of P190,000 – P250,000 per annum
- Preferably a graduate of UP, Ateneo or La Salle
- Must have at least one year experience in the field of sales and marketing
- Basic computer knowledge
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Willing to go on field and have flexible working hours

TECHNICAL OFFICER

- With salary of P200,000 – P280,000 per annum
- Must be a college graduate of Computer Science, Computer Engineering or any related course
- Knowledgeable in hardware/software troubleshooting, networking and scanning software
- Knowledge in Linux and Java an advantage

ACCOUNTING CLERKS

- With salary of P120,000 – P200,000 per annum
- Must be an accounting graduate and must have at least one year experience in the same field
- 21 to 27 years old, must be a self-starter
- Basic computer knowledge; can type up to 40 words per minute; knowledge in Quicken or Quickbooks an advantage
- Must have strong organizational skills with emphasis on accuracy

OUTBOUND SALES AGENTS

- With salary of P120,000 – P200,000 per annum
- Must have excellent command of the English language
- 18 to 27 years old, with outgoing personality
- Willing to work shifts (night/day or weekend)
- Basic computer knowledge
- Fresh graduates are welcome

PLS. SEND YOUR RESUMES WITH ID PICTURE TO:
marcia@nytelecon.com
or mail at P.O. Box 892 Dasmariñas Village, Makati City

CYBERSOURCE, INC.

WEB DESIGNERS/WEBMASTER

- 1-2 years experience in Web Graphic Design
- Fine Arts/Visual Communicator and/or its equivalent Graduate
- Proficiency in Design tools such as Photoshop 7, Corel Draw, Macromedia Freehand 9, Macromedia Flash 5/MX, Illustrator, Fireworks
- Knowledge in Dreamweaver, HTML, Java Script
- Must submit Work Samples/portfolios

WEB DEVELOPERS/PROGRAMMER

- At least 6 months – 1 year experience in Web Administration/ Systems Applications
- Proficiency in any five of the following: Dreamweaver, HTML, DHTML, Javascript, CSS, PHP, CGI, MySQL, ACCESS, ASP, ASP net and Coldfusion a plus
- Knowledge in basic design tools such as Photoshop 7, Corel Draw, Macromedia Flash 5/MX, Swift 3D is a plus

CARTOONIST

- At least 1-2 years experience in Cartoon Drawings and Animations
- Fine Arts/Visual Communicator and/or it's equivalent Graduate
- Proficiency in design tools such as Photoshop 7, Corel Draw, Macromedia Freehand 9, Macromedia Flash 5/MX
- Knowledge in MAYA and other 3d.2d animation tools is a plus.
- Knowledge in Dreamweaver, HTML, is a plus

FOR IMMEDIATE EMPLOYMENT!
We offer highly competitive compensation and benefits package, state-of-the-art training and excellent opportunities for career growth.
Send your resume with 2x2 picture to.

CYBERSOURCE, INC.
Unit 1706 Centerpoint Bldg., Garnett Rd.
corner J. Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. 633-8455 • Fax No.: 6356956

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

GARMENT OPERATIONS MANAGER

- Not more than 45 years old
- To manage & operate a 2,000 sq.m. plant located at Sta. Maria, Bulacan
- At least 3 yrs managerial experience in related field.

INDUSTRIAL ENGINEER

- Single 21-27 yrs old
- Should be able to handle time / motion study, purchasing, material consumption etc.

SEWING SUPERVISOR

- With at least 1 year work experience as a sewing supervisor
- Should be able to supervise sewing techniques & distribution.

Send resumé with picture at: EMAIL ADDRESS:
ewearco@hotmail.com
Fax: 299-6041

SM

Now Hiring for Dasmariñas & Batangas

We've got all the best jobs for you.

Branch Manager / Assistant Branch Manager

(Metro Manila Branches, Cagayan de Oro & Lucena)

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least three (3) years managerial experience in retail operations
- able to conceptualize, implement and assess strategic sales plans; with strong leadership skills to effectively direct a team of store personnel

Human Resource Manager

- graduate of Behavioral Science, Law, Psychology or any 4-year Management course
- with intensive experience in personnel management
- must be able to build and maintain professional relations with people in the organization

Accounting Manager

- Certified Public Accountant
- with at least three (3) years work experience in all accounting operations
- proficient in computer software application
- Team-player, goal-oriented and able to work under pressure

Treasury Manager

- graduate of Accounting or Banking & Finance
- with at least two (2) years supervisory experience in accounting, funds management or treasury functions
- familiar with banking operations and Central Bank procedures

Building Administration Manager

- graduate of Business Administration, Mechanical or Electrical Engineering
- with at least two (2) years work experience in property management and building administration in the same capacity
- able to lead group and prioritize work load to meet deadlines

Customer Relations Service Manager

- graduate of Criminology or any 4 year business course
- male, must be 5'5 1/2 in height & female, 5'2 in height
- with at least one (1) year related work experience
- flexible to different work assignment and willing to be assigned in provincial branches
- must be physically fit and willing to work on extended hours

Nurse

- must be a Registered Nurse
- with at least two (2) years experience in industrial or hospital set-up
- able to establish rapport and deal with all levels of the organization
- willing to work on shift schedules or extended hours

Interested parties may send their comprehensive resumé with recent photo to:

SM Shoemart
SM Corporate Office
Bldg. D 1000 Bay Boulevard, SM Central Business Park
Bay City, Pasay City

or

Visit our website : www.sm-shoemart.com

E-mail: Recruit.SM.HO@sm-shoemart.com

(Please bring Bio-data, 2 pcs. 2x2 colored picture with white background, SSS Number and photocopy of your Transcript of records and Diploma together with the original copy)

The largest and leading **LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY IN THE WORLD** invites applicants for the following positions:

Accounting Supervisor

- Male/Female, 27-31 years old.
- Graduate of BS Accountancy, preferably CPA.
- At least 3 years experience in the application of accounting principles, practices, procedures and financial reporting in a life insurance company.
- Updated knowledge and application of tax regulations and requirements for a life insurance company.
- Proficient in technical and business writing skills.
- Excellent communication skills, interpersonal skills, self-starter, resourceful, team player and able to work with minimum supervision.

Account Officer

- College graduate with a degree in Marketing, Business Administration or any equivalent 4-year course.
- Between 25-35 years old.
- Preferably with Group Insurance experience, both in sales and administration.
- Must be customer service-oriented and with excellent inter-personnel skills.
- Good in oral and written communication.
- Minimum 1-year driving experience.
- Proficient in Windows/MS Office.

We offer an attractive salary and competitive benefit package to the selected candidate. Interested applicants may submit, fax or E-mail their resumé with recent 2x2 colored picture not later than January 11, 2004 at:

NIPPON LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC.
21st F Tower 2 RCBC Plaza 6819 Ayala Avenue
cor. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
Fax No. 7532161 I E-mail: p.regio@nipponlife-phil.com.ph

OLYMPIC BADMINTON CLUB

The largest and most comprehensive badminton facility in South East Asia is currently inviting applicants for the following positions:

COOK

- 25-30 years old, male or female
- Preferably with at least 2 years working experience in fine dining restaurants
- Must be a team player

Olympic Badminton Club
Warehouse 5, 108 E. Rodriguez Ave.,
Libis, Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-9376/951-8114
look for Ms. Meldy
E-mail: dn.fnh@pacific.net.ph

Accounting Clerk

- 20 to 26 yrs. old
- Accounting graduate
- Can work with minimum supervision

Please send resumé with clear ID picture to:

3rd floor, K-Plaza Bldg.,
#18 Kamuning Road, Quezon City
Metro Manila, Philippines

Have a
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

JOIN OUR TEAM!

RECRUITMENT OPEN HOUSE

32F Robinson's Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

January 6 – 9, 2004 • 9am – 5pm

BRING YOUR RESUMÉ AND BE INTERVIEWED RIGHT AWAY!

PREVIOUS APPLICANTS NEED NOT APPLY FOR A PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS FROM DATE OF APPLICATION

for immediate hiring!

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- **CUSTOMER SERVICE eReps™**
- **TRAVEL eReps™**
- **SALES eReps™ (Inbound/Outbound)**
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WE'RE ALSO LOOKING FOR:

SYSTEMS ACCOUNTANT

BS Degree in accounting/finance,
3+ years of accounting and accounting systems experience, proficient with accounting and financial reporting systems, especially Epicor & FRx

STAFF ACCOUNTANTS

2+ years of general accounting, accounts payable management and reporting experience, knowledge in computerized accounting systems, CPA preferred

PAYROLL ASSISTANTS

1+ years experience in timekeeping / payroll function

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

3+ years experience in administrative work and top management assistance, should be pleasing, creative, resourceful and with good analytical skills

SALES MANAGER

5+ years experience in sales marketing or business development, preferably in contact center sales, International work experience, specifically in dealing with U S companies and American executives, must be willing to work U S business hours

SALES OFFICER

2+ years telemarketing or sales experience preferably in IT-enabled or technology-related service industries must be willing to work U S business hours

ACCOUNT MANAGERS

3+ years experience in Account Management, travel industry background (airline, travel agency, etc) preferred, must be willing to work U S business hours

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

Management Trainees will be immersed in a broad range of call center functions in preparation for future leadership roles. Those with operations / account management experience preferred Must have 2+ years work experience in a supervisory or management role

Interested in these positions?

JUST EMAIL YOUR RESUMÉ TO: **manilajobs@peoplesupport.com**

PEOPLESUPPORT is a U S -based outsourced provider that delivers world-class multi-channel customer care solutions from mission-critical contact centers in the Philippines

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **(02) 755-26HR** • VISIT OUR WEBSITE **www.peoplesupport.com**

12-14F PhilamLife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City • 29-33F Robinson's Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Avenue, Makati City • e-Office One, AsiaTown I.T. Park, Apas, Lahug, Cebu City

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- Proficient in GDS such as Abacus, Galileo, Amadeus and/or other airline systems such as Speedwing, Gabriel and Sonic
- Willing to work in variable workshifts and extended hours
- Good communication skills, both oral and written
- Team player and with good understanding of customer service
- Candidates must be able to start immediately

As these are **URGENT** requirements, all interested applicants are requested to personally submit their updated CV's from **Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM** to our HRD.

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please bring a copy of your resume and one photo. We offer attractive renumeration commensurate with your experience

TeleTech, the world leader in the provision of call center solutions is currently undergoing an exciting period of growth in our offices within the Philippines. We're currently on the look out for new talent to work in our world class call centers who have strong command of the English language, are customer service focused,. are analytical and solutions focused, are knowledgeable on PC architecture and applications, have excellent reasoning ability, and are able to interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions and are able to deal with abstract and concrete variables. If you are keen to progress your career with a global company then we want to talk to you! Dealing with callers from all over the United States, you will use your technical support skills to assist customers with their queries., If you have these skills and are available to work night shift, then apply in person at our Open House Week.

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Is the world's largest supplier of automatic test equipment and software for the telecommunications and electronics industries. It is engaged in parts and repair services support for mixed signal, VLSI and memory testing. Its Repair Center facility in CEBU has been in operation since 1996 and its Customer Care Center and Process Lab Operations that recently opened in 2003 employs nearly 200 personnel. With the unprecedented growth of the Company, we are looking for individuals who are creative, aggressive, and mature to fill up the position of:

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As a Global Customer Service Supply Chain Manager, you will be part of the team of professionals responsible for managing the worldwide service logistics inventory network that supports Teradyne's customers. You and your team will be focused on the management Logistics and Material Planning operations in Teradyne's Cebu facility.

Global Customer Services

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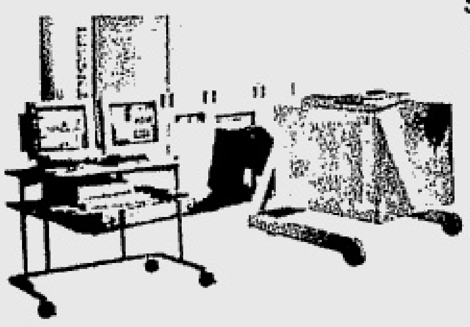
Qualifications:

- The candidate must be a graduate of any 4-5 year College degree, preferably an MBA graduate with at least 8 years experience in Logistics and Materials Planning
- Preferably with more than five (5) years prior management experience
- Strong analytical, interpersonal and communication skills
- Possesses strong leadership skills and is flexible in dealing with employees



We shall only accommodate candidates with specific qualifications and skills requirements as stated above. The Successful candidate will receive a competitive compensation and benefits package within the Semiconductor and electronics industry and has the opportunity to work in a technology driven company like TERADYNE. THIS IS AN URGENT REQUIREMENT. Please send your **application letter** together with your **resume** and **1x1 ID picture not later than 08 January 2004** to:

THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
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Between 21 - 35 years old
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Background in IT or Engineering an advantage
With at least 2 years proven track record in sales
Experienced in managing corporate accounts

Due to the urgency of this manpower requirement, interested applicants are requested to personally submit their comprehensive resume with 2 x 2 colored picture beginning Monday, January 5, 2004 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM to:

Human Resource Development Division
Next Mobile, Inc., Next Mobile Bldg.
2244 España Ave., Manila 1008
or E-mail: hrd@imx.ph

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- Assists in PR related campaigns

Mail your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets,
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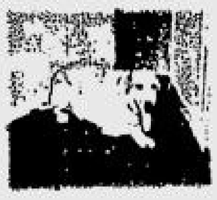

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Provincial Territories: Baguio Tel. (074)442-6417/ (074)442-9016 • Bulacan/Pampanga (0917)536-0533 (0916)758-3270 • Davao (082)234-5423 / (0916)712-7069 • Gen. Santos (083)302-6393/ (0920)922-4188
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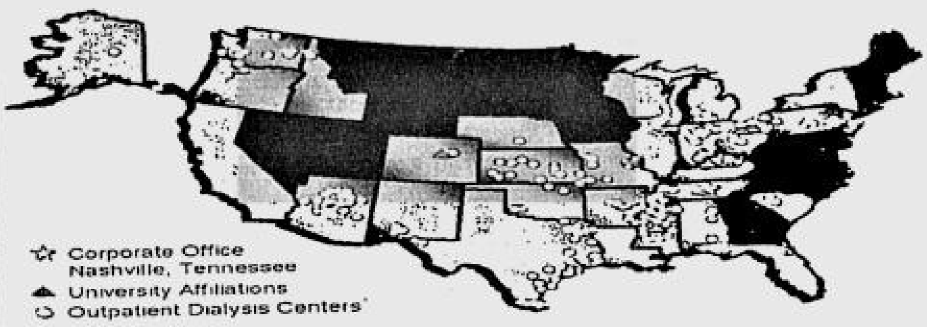

☆ Corporate Office Nashville, Tennessee
▲ University Affiliations
○ Outpatient Dialysis Centers
○ 2003 De Novos

Renal Care Group, Inc. (RCG) will be returning to the Philippines for recruitment of additional Filipino nurses. Since their first trip last February 2001, **Renal Care Group** has already employed **29** nurses deployed by IPAMS and **HealthStar** along with their bona fide families. They are now conveniently settled and enjoying their new life and rewarding careers with **RCG.** Additional **87** are underprocessed for their appropriate deployment to RCG

Renal Care Group is a specialized dialysis services company that provides care to patients with kidney disease. The company currently treats over **20,000** patients at more than **260** owned outpatient dialysis facilities, in addition to providing acute dialysis services at **120** hospitals. Over **6,500** associates provide services across the company's **27 - U.S. State network**

www.renalcaregroup.com

CGFNS PASSERS WITH EXPERIENCE IN DIALYSIS, ICU, or MED-SURG MAY APPLY. OTHER RNs WHO ARE AWAITING RESULTS OR HAVE A TEST DATE FOR THE CGFNS or NCLEX ARE ALSO WELCOME TO APPLY

Come and meet us on the following final interview dates:

DAVAO -	**Marco Polo Hotel**	**January 5th**
CEBU -	**Marriott Hotel**	**January 7th**
MANILA -	**IPAMS Office**	**January 8th & 9th**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED TO COVER ALL PROCESSING AND VISA FEES TO INCLUDE REVIEW & TESTING FEES FOR TOEFL/TWE, TSE, NCLEX PLUS FREE AIRFARE AND ONE MONTH HOUSING IN THE U.S.A.

HealthStar International Inc., from ***Houston, Texas*** will be in town on **January 5** to **January 9, 2004** identifying nurses for its client, ***Renal Care Group** based in **Nashville, Tennessee.*** There will be a final selection with direct hire contract execution.

To take advantage of this opportunity, candidates must apply ASAP by submitting comprehensive resume, school records (diploma, transcript of records), board rating, training certificates, employment credentials, plus two (2) passport photographs to

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E-Mail: us@ipams.com / Fax: 521-1189 or 521-1320
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INDUSTRIAL PERSONNEL and MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC. (IPAMS) is a pioneering Philippine consulting firm which provides professional counsel and assistance in labor relations, personnel management, and overseas and local manpower recruitment. IPAMS was conceived in 1971 and incorporated in 1972 by a group of professionals in the labor relations and personnel management fields. The experience, knowledge and understanding of these professionals about the recruitment business in the Philippines have been the most valuable resource of IPAMS. We are in constant search for YOUNG and DYNAMIC CANDIDATES for our following principals:

URGENT REQUIREMENTS FOR MAJOR GCC STATES & K.S.A. COMPANIES

• EMIRATES GROUP •
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS
LOADING TEAM LEADERS
TRAINERS (MECHANICS/ELECTRICIANS)
GROUND DISPATCHERS
LOAD CONTROL SUPERVISORS
EQUIPMENT OPERATORS

• DUBAI DUTY FREE •
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
FEMALE SALES STAFF
WINDOW DISPLAY / VISUAL ARTISTS

• QATAR AIRWAYS •
Doha, Qatar
CABIN CREW GROOMING & STANDARDS OFFICER
CREW SCHEDULERS
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

• EMIRATES PETROLEUM PRODUCTS CO. (EPPCO) •
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- January 5th & 6th Final Interview -
CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSISTANTS
(FEMALE)

• SHARAF GROUP •
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
BRAND MANAGER - COSMETICS (F)
BUYERS - RETAIL (M/F)
VISUAL MERCHANDISERS (M/F)

• GULFGUARD •
Jubai, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- January 6th & 7th Final Interview -
MECHANICAL SUPERVISORS
INSTRUMENT / MECH'L.TECHS.

• AMIANTIT •
Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
FOREMEN - FABRICATORS

• ALUMINUM PRODUCTS CO. •
Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
SENIOR PLANNERS
COST ACCOUNTANTS
Q.C. INSPECTORS
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SUBMIT COMPREHENSIVE RESUME WITH DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION TOGETHER WITH COPIES OF EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATES & SCHOOL CREDENTIALS, PASSPORT COPY AND TWO (2) PCS. RECENT PASSPORT SIZE PHOTOS TO:

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UNIQUE ADVANTAGES :

⇨ Lead Trainor is Mr. Ricardo de Vera, recognized/cited for his creative and motivational style in conducting life changing skills seminars and cutting-edge training workshops to countless audiences both locally and abroad. He is a Certified International Trainor from Singapore with advance training in Japan, director of the Phil. Marketing Association, resource trainor/consultant to the Philippine Training Center of Dept. of Trade & Industry and ASEAN Center of Excellence. Facilitator par excellance.

⇨ Workshops/seminars based on international standards/guidelines an adapted to the Philippine audience and business settings.

⇨ Reasonable fees for in-house/public sessions. Fees start at only P 800.00@ 1/2 day.

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For our expansion program, we are looking for dynamic, self-driven, highly competitive and result-oriented individuals to fill-up the following positions:

AUDIT MANAGER

- ✓ must be a CPA
- ✓ with at least 5 years extensive experience in audit and accounting firm; with exposure & competence in doing financial, systems, and operational compliance audit
- ✓ background in retail store operations an advantage

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

- ✓ graduate of Business Administration, Mechanical or Electrical Engineering course
- ✓ solid experience in building administration, property management, tenants & community relations and local store marketing preferred
- ✓ must have at least 5 years managerial background; with high standards of quality and customer service-orientation

LOGISTICS MANAGER

- ✓ graduate of Business Management, Accounting, or Industrial Engineering course; male
- ✓ willing to be assigned in Carmona, Cavite
- ✓ with at least 5 years experience in warehouse management, delivery and transport administration, and logistics support for better supply-chain management
- ✓ those with background in retail chain of stores operations preferred

LEASING MANAGER

- ✓ graduate of Business Management or Marketing course
- ✓ with at least 3 years experience in marketing, leased area management and tenants relations; very good communication and presentation skills is a must
- ✓ exposure in retail shopping center operations preferred

FINANCE MANAGER

- ✓ must be a CPA, with MBA degree
- ✓ with expert level of competence in finance and business management; with ability to assess process, people, technology and organization
- ✓ with at least 5 years experience in managerial capacity handling and developing people and driving profitability and growth

SECURITY AND SAFETY MANAGER

- ✓ graduate of BS Criminology, Military Science or related course; male
- ✓ with at least 5 years experience in security and safety management of company property, building facilities and personnel; must be competent in security & contingency planning, first aid and disaster management, background investigation and legal documentation
- ✓ exposure in retail operations an advantage

TRAINING MANAGER

- ✓ graduate of Business Management, Marketing, Behavioral Science or other related courses; should not be older than 35 years of age
- ✓ must have at least 5 years experience in managing the training and development function; with expert level of competence in knowledge management, curriculum development, public speaking, group facilitation and team building
- ✓ appreciation of the retail store and customer service quality standards an advantage

ENGINEERING OFFICER

- ✓ licensed Electrical or Mechanical engineers; male
- ✓ with technical proficiency in industrial wiring, electrical works, handling of preventive & corrective maintenance of refrigeration equipments, air-conditioning units, STP and generator sets
- ✓ exposure in retail shopping center administration an advantage

We offer a highly attractive compensation package, incentive and bonuses commensurate to performance and opportunities for continuing training and development.

Applicants must be friendly, with good communication skills and pleasing personality. All qualified respondents may apply in person or mail their resumé with picture to:

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MANDALUYONG CITY
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M to TH - 7:30am - 9am

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DASMARINAS, CAVITE
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MTW - 9am - 11am

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Key technical skills requirement are:

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Programmer	1-5 years of actual experience
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Project Manager	8-20 years of actual experience
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- Preferably can work with QuickBooks

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   - At least High School grad.
   - Has pleasing personality
   - Has good communication skills
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   - Experience not necessary

Send resume and 2x2 photo to:

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER
54 Hollywood Park
Alabang 400, Muntinlupa City
or email to coffee_resume@yahoo.com

ACCOUNTANT

- Female, single, not more than 30 yrs of age
- Graduate of B.S. Accounting, experience is an advantage but not required

MANAGEMENT TRAINEE

- Female, single, not more than 26 years of age
- Graduate of any 4-year course. Computer literate
- With or w/o experience in accounting related works

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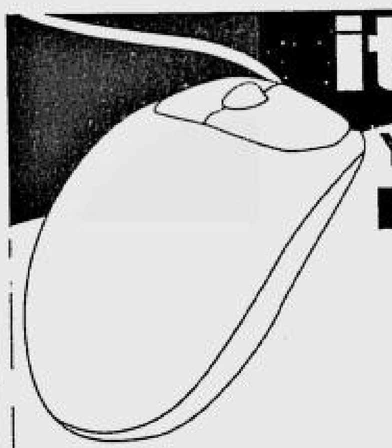

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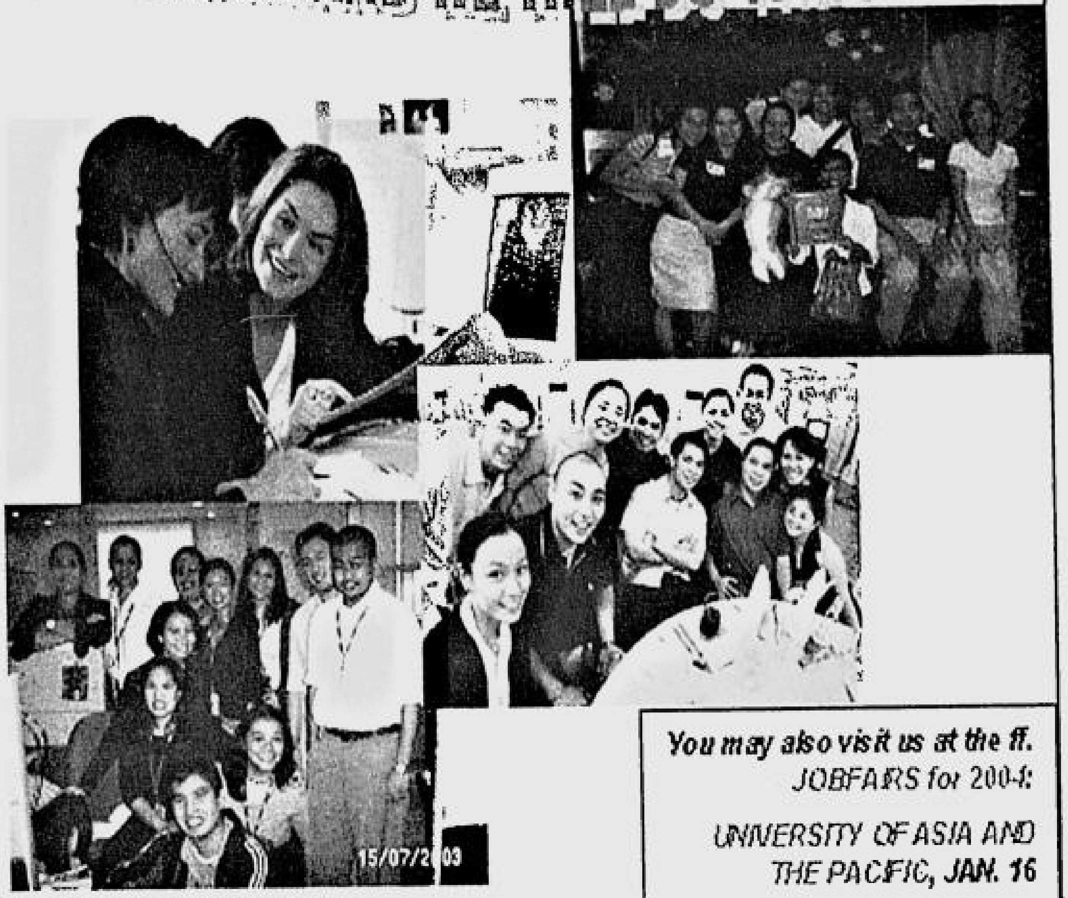

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For the Food and Beverage (Banquet Section)

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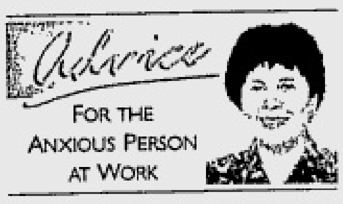
'Should I wait for bank's answer or look for another job?'

By Tita Datu Puangco


Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I AM 25 years old, married with a three-year old son. I worked as an agency sales trainer of a life insurance company for two years. I resigned last year to look for a more stable job because I am not company hired, rather I belong to the sales agency force. I admit that I am having difficulty in finding a job since I'm married and most of the companies prefer single applicants.

Last September, I saw an advertisement that a certain bank will be opening in our area. I went on the scheduled date and had my interview. After that, the interviewer asked me to come back on a certain day for the examination. Seven of us took the exams. After the exam, they gave us a schedule for the medical exam and they also gave us the list of pre-employment requirements.

But the HR officer emphasized that we are not yet hired, that we will still be evaluated at their home office. They will just contact us. After the exam, we were set to be interviewed by the vice president of the company. Since then, I have been following up my application. It is now more than two months. They told me that the evaluation is not yet done. But I learned that four of my fellow applicants were already having their training. Until now, I have not yet received any call from the bank.

My friend who is working also in a bank, told me that if the company allows you to take your medical exams this, indicates that you are hired. Is this true? Should I believe them that their evaluation is not yet done? Or they just cannot tell me that I did not qualify? I do not have any idea on the SOP in the HR function. If I follow up again, what question will I ask to get the right answer? Do you think I still have the chance to get hired? Should I still wait or move on? Please give me an advice what to do. I really need your help! Hope you would answer my letter. Thank you so much and more power!

Confused Applicant

Your question is whether to wait or move on to prospect for other jobs. My answer is to go for the safe side, especially if you badly need a job. Move on and continue to look for other potential jobs. Until you sign the job contract, there is no guarantee that you are hired. If the bank calls you in the future, then you can then make the decision to accept or refuse the offer.

It is true that it is typical practice for companies to require the medical exam and pre-employment requirements when a person qualifies for a job. But different companies have different policies. For this particular bank, the human resource officer explained their policy saying that giving you these requirements does not mean you are hired. I believe him/her that the final decision is with the head office. This is true with most banks.

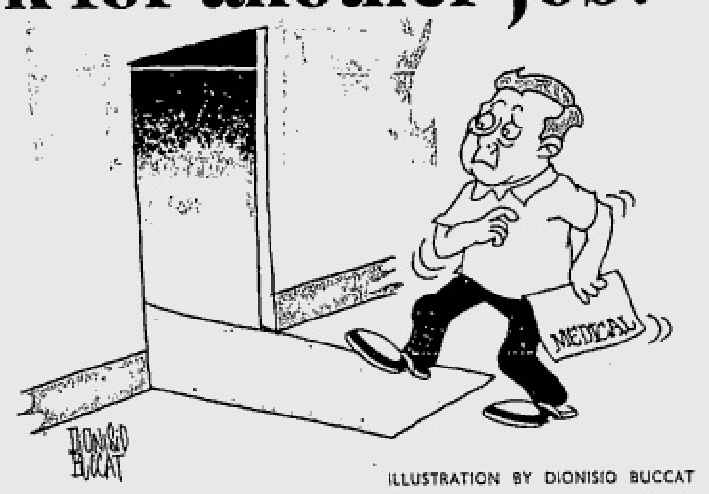


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Now, what should you ask the human resource officer the next time you follow-up to make sure you get the right answer? I propose you ask the person, "Please advise me what to do. How long should I wait to know if the bank is hiring me or not? Do you think I should wait or look for other job opportunities?" I am sure the human resource officer will give you an honest answer.

By the way, you may also want to explore another job option such as applying to become a training officer in other companies. I am sure many companies would value a person with sales training like you. My prayer is for you to land the stable job that you desire soon.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Email feedback to advice @ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902)*

Needs, wants of people at work

From page E14

In addition, the remaining half reported that there might be downsizing in their organizations in the future. In that October survey, we asked how organizations could help the downsized employees. Top answers were: communication, separation packages, career planning and outplacement services. We also asked readers what they would be willing to do as employees to help prevent downsizing. Surprisingly, around a third said they would agree to a reduction of work hours and freezing salary increases.

Another issue that we focused on was the use of computers in the workplace. In last month's survey, we found that our respondents, on the average, spent two thirds of their time in front of the computer. Computers were typically used for word processing, spreadsheets, email and the Internet. Majority of respondents learned how to use computers on their own, through self-study. However, peers coached half and a fourth learned via training programs or computer classes. In general, people felt that computers made them more productive.

Romance at work

Our February survey generated much interest because it was on romance in the workplace. Almost half of respondents admitted to having experienced a romantic relationship with a coworker. Unfortunately, for three out of four of these employees, the relationship did not last. Although majority of organizations do not interfere with employee romances, we learned that around a third of organizations tolerate them as long as the persons involved do not belong in the same department.

What should not be tolerated, however, is sexual harassment. One of three respondents to our March survey reported that they had been victims of sexual harassment. This was in the form of sexual advances, pressures for sexual favors, gestures, sexually explicit stories or jokes and notes. Although three out of four companies appear to have policies against sexual harassment, employees said that the problem was no one came forward to complain and one-third of cases never get reported. The results suggest that companies can step up their efforts to prevent and raise awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Special groups of workers

Finally, People at Work Pulse focused on special groups of workers such as those with disabilities. In our August survey, although majority of respondents said they were open to working with people with disabilities, many also said that they could not see their jobs being done by people with certain disabilities. In fact, only one-third of respondents said they already have handicapped workers in their organizations. A great majority also believed that people with disabilities need to be given more protection and equal opportunity.

In June, we also looked at the plight of working students. As reported, the most difficult challenge in being a working student was balancing school and work requirements. Other challenges were physical exhaustion and lack of sleep. However, many working students also said that, other than the financial benefits, combining both work and studies also developed them into well-rounded individuals. They do warn that it is difficult and that the decision to combine both requires much sacrifice and maturity.

So, these were what we learned last year which we owe to the participation of our readers.

We would like to thank all the graduate students and colleagues at the Ateneo Department of Psychology who coauthored and served as research assistants in our surveys. But most of all, we would like to thank the readers who took the time out to participate and read our monthly survey and report. We are especially thankful for your comments and welcome suggestions on survey topics for the coming year. We invite readers to share with us their opinions and experiences in the coming year's surveys so this may truly become a venue to feel the pulse of people at work.

(Dr. Hechanova is a faculty member of the Ateneo Dept. of Psychology and Director for Research and OD at Ateneo CORD. You may contact her via email through ateneocord@ admu.edu.ph*)*

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Malate
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Malate, Manila

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Caloocan City

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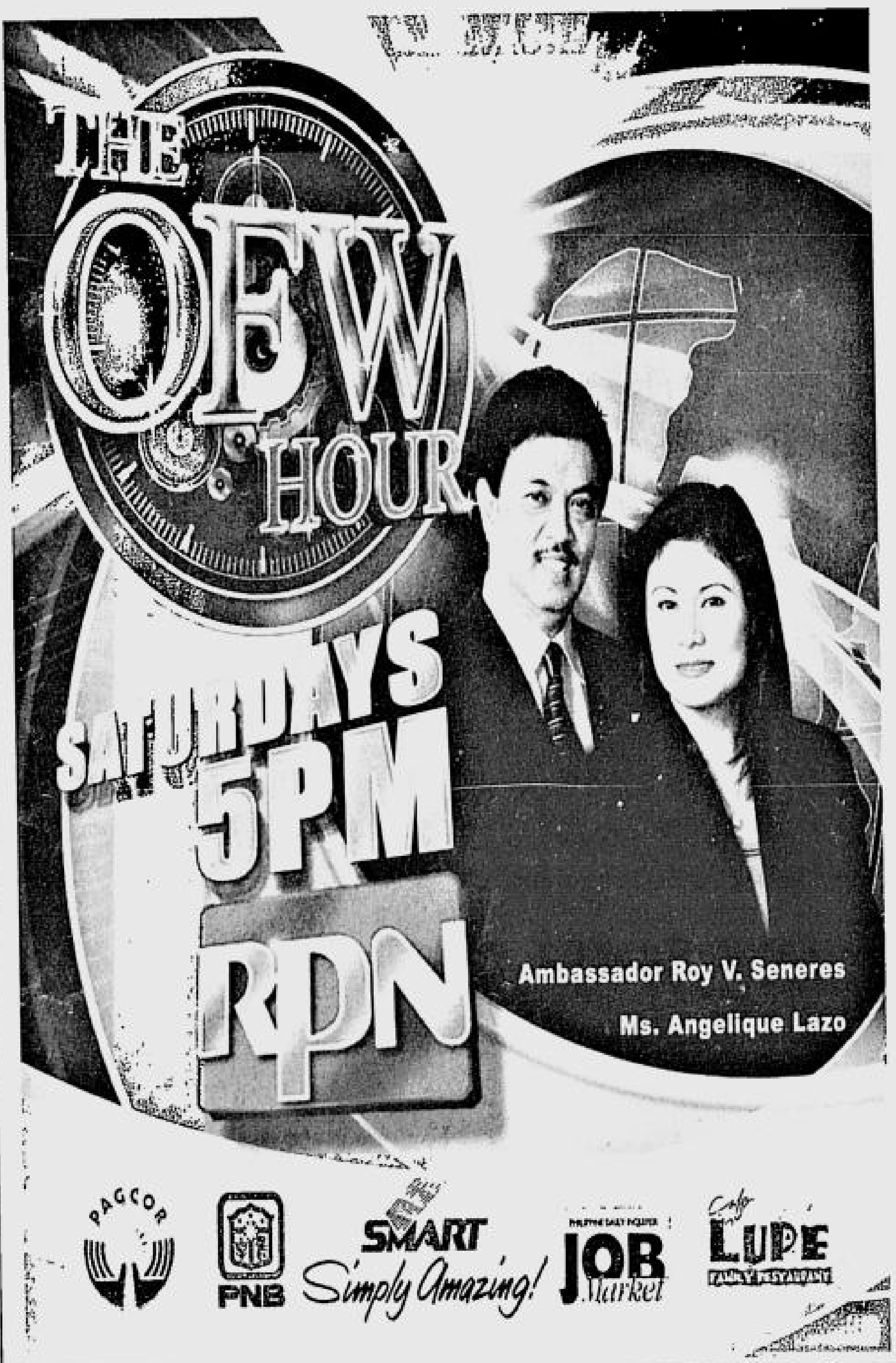

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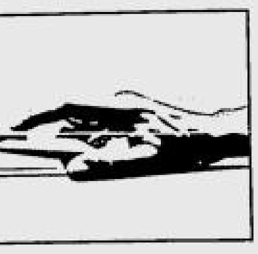

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- Willing to travel anywhere in Luzon and in Mindanao areas
- Team player and with strong personal values

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- Male/Female not more than 30 years of age
- Graduate of Behavioral Science or Theology in a reputable university
- With 2-3 years related experience in Corporate or in Christian Church setting
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- Team player and with strong personal values

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ACCOUNTING ASSOCIATES (AA)

- Male/Female not more than 30 years of age
- Graduate of Accountancy course, CPA is an advantage
- At least 2-3 years related experience
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- Proficient in Branch to branch/Head office accounting or vise versa
- Willing to be assigned anywhere in Luzon and in Mindanao
- Team player and with strong personal values

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- Male/Female not more than 30 years of age
- Graduate of Accountancy course, CPA is an advantage
- With at least 2-4 years of auditing experience
- Adept in branch and head office accounting
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- Technical knowledge and experience in ink manufacturing is preferred
- Exposure in formulating manufacturing policies, programs and standards, product costing/pricing, sourcing and maintenance of raw material stocks, analysis and evaluation of plant operations, its variances from standard/targets and institution of corrective measures is an advantage.

Accounting Analyst

- Accounting graduate
- With previous general accounting experience
- Graduate from reputable university

HRD Supervisor

- Psychology graduate preferably with Masteral degree
- At least 3-5 years experience as HRD Supervisor
- With experience in recruitment and training
- Knowledgeable in Labor Laws
- Computer Literate

UV Helper

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- College level

UV Coater/Sheeter Operator

- Experience in UV Coater and sheeter operation
- Team player
- College level

Assistant Printer

- Preferably 2 years experience sheet fed operation
- Fast learner
- College level

Guillotine Technician

- Experience in polar cutter operation
- Fast learner

Folding M/C Technician

- Engineering background
- Previous experience on operator of STAHL folding preferred
- Analytical/fast learner
- Team player

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- Preferably engineering background
- Analytical/fast learner
- Team player

Press Operator

- Male/Female
- Previous experience preferred
- College level preferred

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- Male/Female
- Willing to work in industrial environment

Engineering Support

- Male/Female
- Mechanical/EE/ECE graduates

Pre-Press Technician

- Male/Female
- College level
- Previous experience preferred (but not necessary)
- Familiarity with MAC and PC and major S/W applications (Adobe, Corel, Macromedia)
- Background in print production preferred

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- Male
- College level
- Previous experience preferred (but not necessary)
- Familiarity with MAC and PC and major S/W applications (Adobe, Corel, Macromedia)
- Background in print production preferred.

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- Male / college graduate
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- Willing to work overtime

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- Graduate of Engineering
- At least 5 years of solid work experience as Project Manager
- With strong background in construction and project management (with economic aspect), monitoring, and marketing
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Willing to be assigned in Cagayan de Oro

**Interview will be conducted either in Manila or Cagayan de Oro*

THESE POSITIONS ARE FOR HIRING IN EARLY JANUARY 2004

Please send your resumé and/or CV through post mail or e-mail to:

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Maria Lorna N. Cusi
42 Ponce Street San Lorenzo Village, 1223 Makati City
E-mail: hiphil03@yahoo.com

All applications must be received on or before **January 6, 2004.** Only applicants meeting the above requirements will be considered for interview.

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is in need of the following personnel:

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- ▪ Graduate of Finance/Financial Management
- ▪ At least 3 years work experience in preparing and monitoring of budgets, accounting, purchasing and inventory
- ▪ Experience in NGOs collaborating with different funding agencies, donors, and cost sharing
- ▪ Good oral and written communication skills

Logistician (based in Cagayan de Oro)*:

- ▪ College graduate (any 4-year business course)
- ▪ At least 3 years work experience in purchasing (office and field) and inventory management, specifically in the construction industry
- ▪ Has an established network of suppliers and similar references

Candidates for the above position must be:

- ▪ Fast learner
- ▪ Responsible, well-organized and can work with less supervision
- ▪ Preferably with working experience in an NGO

**Interview will be conducted either in Manila or Cagayan de Oro*

THESE POSITIONS ARE FOR HIRING IN EARLY JANUARY 2004

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Global HR head bases work ethics on four pillars of values

By Candy G. Villanueva

HR Focus

COMING from Bangalore, India, Sudendra Rao knows what a life of difficulty is all about. "I know the odds of people in several parts of the world who need to walk hours to fetch a pot of drinking water, also the people struggling to make their ends meet living in some of the richest countries in the world," Rao shares. Knowing this, Rao has made it a goal to make a difference in the lives of people in whatever he does.

Avenue

It is with human resources that Rao found an avenue to help people "realize their inner potential and assist them reach their goals." Sudendra Rao is presently Corporate VP of HR for Epixtar Corporation. Based in the US, Rao is responsible for all the HR challenges of their global operations, including the setting up of the company's new operations in the Philippines.

> Rao goes by four values which he regards as his pillars in work: dedication, hard work, commitment and passion.

Epixtar is a global IT enabled services provider to a diverse client range. The company believes in making their employees accomplish their professional goals, pride themselves in providing state-of-the-art work environment to their employees. Their employees, are, in turn, inspired to participate and contribute to an atmosphere of professional pride and establish financial prosperity as a result of hard work.

Global background

Rao has been all over the world in his crusade to help better the lives of people. He has played a major role in recruiting thousands of IT professionals from around the world for projects in different parts of the globe. A true world-class HR professional, Rao has worked for several multinational organizations like Deutsche Group, Samsung Corporation, Citi Group, HP, Honeywell, Infosys Technologies, Birla Group, IMR Global (now CGI, Canada) and Ford Escorts. The year 2003 has brought him to Philippine shores with Epixtar Corporation.

Impressive background

Rao's extensive resume starts with an impressive educational background. Aside from a bachelor's degree in General Laws, Rao also earned a bachelor's degree in Commerce and Management. He has a postgraduate degree in personnel and HR management and a diploma in Journalism and Communication. This avid scholar also has a master's in Economics and is currently working on his dissertation on e-Learning Strategies for Organizational Development for a doctorate degree in International Human Capital Development at the Colorado State University, USA.

As Corporate VP for HR, he oversees and handles all HR functions for thousands of employees all over the world. Rao is also responsible for international business acquisitions and setting up of Software Development Centers and Call Centers, the newest of which is in the Philippines.

Pillars

Rao's global leadership arm compels him to follow strict rules and disciplines in his profession. He goes by four values which he regards as his pillars in work: dedication, hard work, commitment and passion. "To be an effective HR executive, one has to focus on developing these pillars in one's self to inspire the organization. I believe my strength lies in the ability to provide an example of these characteristics through my own work and actions."

As an HR leader, Rao also uses the four pillars in motivating his people. "I spend a lot of time with our people to help them realize their inner potential through coaching, mentoring and training. By providing true support, guidance, mentorship, I have seen many of them taking up challenging assignments and grow within their profession," says Rao.

Opportunities

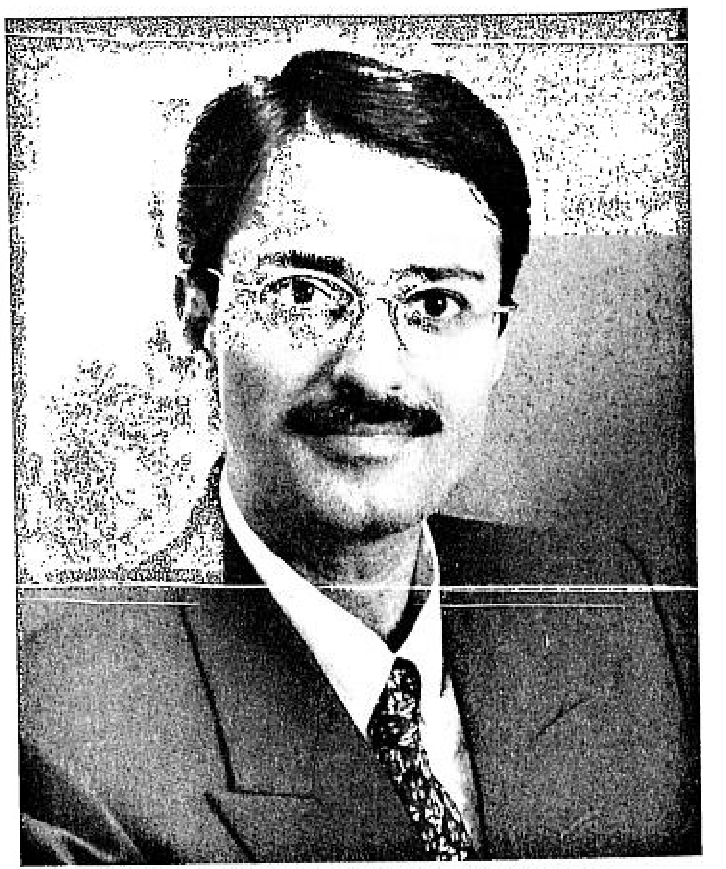
A highly "employee-centric" company, Epixtar places great value on its employees. "Our success lies in our employees' progress," affirms the VP. Rao and his team believe that they can encourage employee commitment by creating opportunities for growth, development, and promotion from within.

"My mission is to help our people attain a productive and complimentary work/life balance. I deeply involve myself in the process of developing and refining our strategies to make our employees as successful as they can dream, not only on the job but in the larger aspects of their lives," Rao humbly claims.

Life mission

Rao has extended his mission beyond the corporate walls. It is Rao's life mission to help improve the quality of life of many. In spite of the challenges of his work, the pressures of his studies and the responsibilities that come with being a husband and father, Rao still finds the time to share a big part of himself. He is presently a volunteer in several NGOs involved in projects by the United Nations, the World Bank and local governments.

This good-hearted volunteer trains NGOs on various soft skills and helps local schools to develop leadership skills among young students. But when he is not out saving the world, Rao is at home learning from his gifted 10-year-old daughter how to create the family web page.



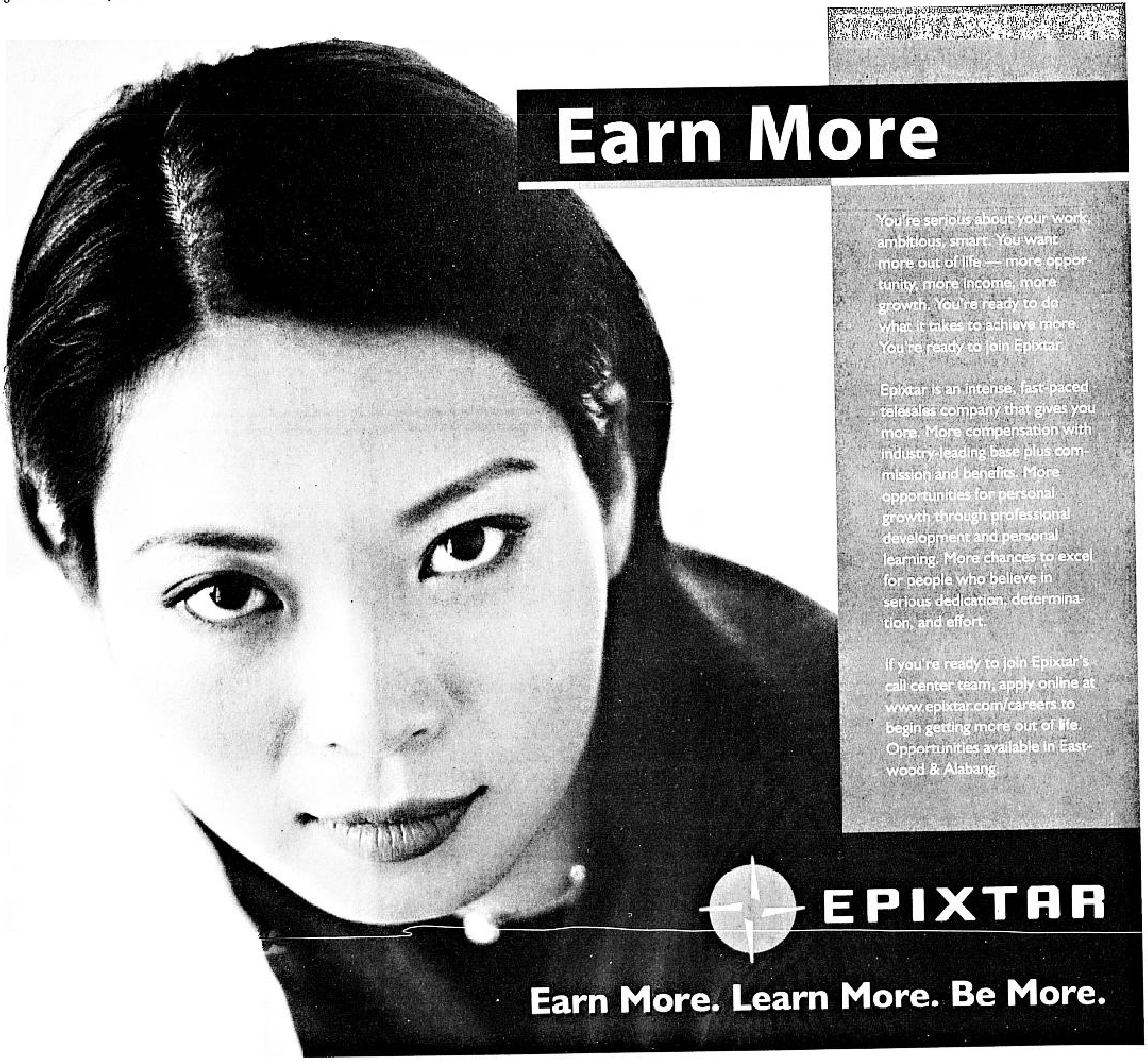
SUDENDRA Rao, Epixtar Corporation's Corporate VP for HR

10 ways to pamper yourself at work

By Karen Anne C. Liquete

HERE are 10 more ways to pamper yourself at work without spending a fortune:

1. Support a charitable cause you believe in. Doing good for somebody who needs your help sure can boost your self-esteem.
2. Meditate for at least five minutes in a day.
3. Take time out for prayer.
4. Try one new cuisine at least once a week. Expose yourself to new flavors and tastes.
5. Clean your desktop.
6. Place a poster of Johnny Depp or Monica Belucci on your computer desktop to inspire you during the day.
7. Look out the window and daydream about what you'll be doing in the next five years.
8. Sunbathe for a moment in an open window. Feel the warmth of the sun enveloping your face and enjoy your connection to nature.
9. Wear real jewelry that you usually keep in your closet to work instead of those fake accessories you usually wear. You'll feel so rich you won't have time to think that you lack so many things.
10. Stash a bottle of cologne or perfume in your drawer. When you're feeling blue, freshen the air with your feel good scent. Smell wonderful from top to toe.



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MANAGEMENT TRAINEE (code: MT-1)
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Sunday **PEOPLE** *at* **WORK**
Contributing Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

PEOPLE AT WORK PULSE RECAP

Needs, wants of people at work

by Ma. Regina M. Hechanova, Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD)

WHEN we first started People at Work Pulse a year ago, we weren't sure whether people would care about participating in or reading it. Yet, to our surprise, it generated a growing interest and readership. Throughout the past 12 months, we tackled various topics—how people feel about work, employee needs and work conditions, work issues that confront employees and special groups of employees. To celebrate our first year, we are recapping all that we have learned about people at work.

View on work

In our November survey, we learned that employees see work as primarily an opportunity for using one's talents and skills. Work is seen as a means of establishing one's identity and giving meaning to their lives. In fact, majority of respondents said that they would work even if they didn't need to.

However, the reality is that work is also a means of satisfying basic needs. In a number of our surveys, we asked employees about their needs. One such need was the need for spiritual growth at work. Majority of respondents to our January survey believed that their companies should contribute to their spiritual growth. We learned that employers have tried to do so by sponsoring masses and worship services, including prayer as part of meetings and other events, sponsoring seminars and retreats, and providing a place of worship and organizing faith groups/fellowships.

Rest and recreation

Beyond spiritual needs, another manifested need was the need for rest and recreation. Our April survey showed that around one-third of workers go on overtime everyday. And even though overtime provides extra income, half of workers would rather have the extra time for themselves or their family.

The ubiquitous cell phone has also become an important tool in the workplace as we learned in our July survey. However, workers also admit that cell phones have intruded on their non-work time. Majority admitted entertaining business related calls after office hours and during weekends.

Not surprisingly, employees expressed the need for more time for rest and recreation. Although majority of respondents in our May survey were opposed to having extended work hours in four-day work weeks, most were in favor of moving most holidays to the weekend to allow for longer vacations. Other than vacations, organizations help their employees get some rest and recreation via outings, sports programs, parties, teambuilding workshops, etc.

Motivations

In September, we found that what motivated workers to improve their job performance was their personal need to do their best. However, they also expressed the need to be rewarded and recognized for good performance. What rewards do people want? The top five responses were: travel, cash, gadgets, appliances, and awards and celebrations.

A great majority of employees also recognized that rewards should be based on employee performance and that more rewards should be given to better performers. Fortunately, two-thirds of employees understand that rewards are not only dependent on individual performance but are also contingent on organizational performance. This shows that employees do consider the financial capability of the organization.

A number of our surveys focused on various issues confronting workers. One issue that strikes fear in the heart of many workers is downsizing. A quarter of our respondents reported that their organization is currently or has already downsized.

NEEDS, WANTS/E10

What's inside

Advice for the Anxious Person at Work
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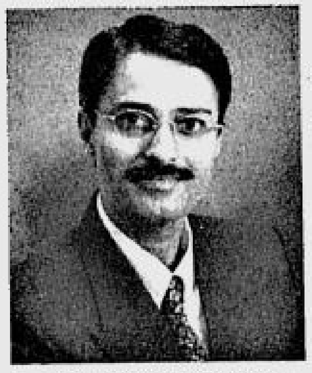
HR Focus: Sudendra Rao of Epixtar Corporation
p. E12



Work-life balance

PEOPLE AT WORK *Pulse*

PEOPLE at Work and the Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD) partner to listen to the heartbeats of working people through this People at Work Pulse.

1. On the average, how many hours a week do you work? ___
2. On the average, how many weekends a month do you work? _____

For questions 3 to 5, please indicate the number corresponding to your agreement with: 1—strongly disagree 2—disagree 3—neutral 4—agree 5—strongly agree

3. Overall, I feel I have work-life balance ______
4. I do not get to spend enough time with my family, friends, and loved ones _____
5. I do not get to spend any time on myself ______
6. Which of the following work-life programs does your company provide? (check all that applies)
    - a. Compressed work week
    - b. Family leaves
    - c. Health and wellness programs
    - d. Educational assistance programs
    - e. Study leaves
    - f. Personal interest seminars
    - g. Outreach programs
    - h. Counseling services
    - i. Stress/time management courses
    - j. Housing loans/benefits
    - k. Transportation allowance/service
    - l. Programs for family
    - m. Recreational programs
    - n. Telecommuting
    - o. Day care
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Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City
Fax No. (632) 426-6065; Email: ateneocord@admu.edu.ph

Or text answers to (0920) 831-9522. Write: topic 1. (answer), 2. (answer), etc. name, gender, status, position, company, address, contact numbers or email.

Winners for last month are: Jenice Sumaway and Bing Mejino. Please get your gift packages from Tere of People at Work at tel. no. (632) 897-8808 local 554.

The starlight challenge

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

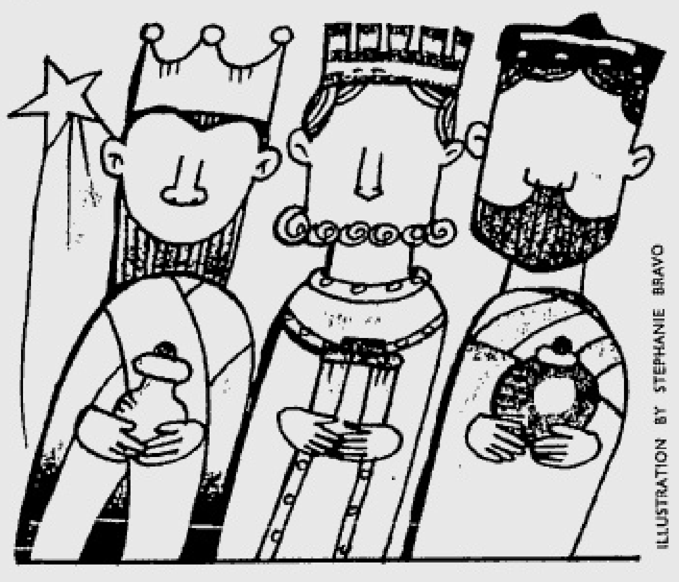
IT LEAVES me in awe to think that all it took for the three magi to find the Savior's birthplace was a star. Some scholars claim it was a comet that led Melchior, Gaspar and Balthasar to the manger, but whatever, I can believe it was a heavenly body whose light showed the wise men the way. It's amazing how in those days people trusted their instincts—they gleaned messages in dreams, they listened to angels, they followed stars. Did guidance come easy for them because their hearts were purer? Or because life was simpler and the air, cleaner?

Imagine their conversations as ordinary workers then went about their daily chores! How do you think the camel drivers reacted to news about the Messiah's birth being conveyed by an angel to shepherds asleep in a cave? What would you have thought if you as a teenaged weaver heard from your giggling girlfriends that one of your adolescent coworkers got pregnant by some spirit?

In our contemporary workplaces where employees may watch TV or read tabloids during lunch or coffee breaks, such news would be classified as oddities—pure *kababalaghan.* How time and technology can affect man's values! Now we believe in our dreams—of becoming millionaires via the lotto. We behold angels—scantily clad "heavenly bodies" in the tabloids. We follow stars—if not the scandalous superstars, then the daily horoscope guide. In this age of fiber optics, is the challenge of the starlight to find Jesus and offer Him gifts too small to bother about?

(Email the author at avemaria@csi.com.ph)

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL



Gospel 2: 1-12

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then, they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

OFWs: 'missionaries of work'

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB,DD

THE STORY of the "three kings" or three wise men who left their kingdoms and braved several dangers in order to find the Child Jesus, brings to my mind our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who have left their homes and loved ones to find better paying jobs in foreign lands. They work hard abroad; bring greater financial blessings to their families and to our national economy, a fact which has prompted our government leaders to call them "modern day heroes" of our country.

But our Filipino workers who work abroad, do not work mainly for the dollars they would earn, since from the experience of many, the money gained through work abroad does not truly match the amount of toil, hardships and adverse conditions found in a foreign work place. Rather, it is the call of duty for the family and love for the others—values higher than money—that make most OFWs accept the difficult working conditions in foreign lands. Moreover, as our OFWs taking some menial jobs demonstrate, the dignity of work is not found in the kind of work one has but rather in the way the worker does his/her job, in the amount of love and faith he/she does the work and for whom he/she offers the work. They do their work cheerfully and well, making them liked by their foreign employers.

Like the wise men from the east who left their homelands and offered gifts to the Child Jesus, our OFWs go to work in foreign lands and by their examples, offer to other workers the authentic value and dignity of work, making them veritable "missionaries of work."

(Email the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)

Sunday INQUIRER magazine

GET TO KNOW SOME REAL PEOPLE

January 4, 2004

Cookie Duran

Kicking High with Capoeira

Why this lithe and lovely young IT professional is passionate about the hot new Brazilian martial art, which is as much a dance as it is a weapon of defense

By Eric S. Caruncho
Photographs by August Dela Cruz

all and tan and young and lovely, the girl from capoeira can also kick your butt, if need be.

By day, twentysomething Michelline "Cookie" Duran works as an IT consultant for Caltex Asia. But in the evenings, she dances to the beat of a different drum. For the last couple of years or so, the newly-married former competitive swimmer has been immersed in the world of capoeira.

Capo what?

For the uninitiated, capoeira is that uniquely Brazilian form of self-expression that combines martial art, dance, sport and philosophy. As the legend goes, the Portuguese colonizers of Brazil imported slaves from their colonies in Africa to work the plantations. From all accounts, the Portuguese were just about as brutal as most slave owners go, and slave revolts were common. As a result, the slightest hint of aggressiveness on the part of the slaves was viciously suppressed. In order to practice their indigenous styles of unarmed fighting, the Africans disguised them as a seemingly harmless dance, performed to drumming and chanting. This was the birth of capoeira.

Eventually, capoeira gained a reputation as a deadly fighting skill, so much so that it was officially banned, only becoming legal in the late 1930s.

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Cookie

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ESCOLA BRASILEIRA DE
CAPOEIRA
Lufthansa

Gotchal Professor Batata executes a takedown, right; Duran, below left, is capoeira's poster girl

Today, next to soccer, of course, it is Brazil's most popular sport, with thousands of schools throughout the country. It is also gaining popularity in Europe and the US, especially since Madonna's choreographer started putting capoeira moves into some of her videos. It's also catching on in Manila, and this might just be the year when the sport's vigorous moves hit the mainstream.

Speaking of moves, the most distinctive and spectacular capoeira moves are those performed upside down, with the capoeirista standing on his hands, or doing back flips, or spinning around like a break dancer. There are kicks and takedowns and leg sweeps, as in other martial arts, but there is also a fluidity and a playful atmosphere that sets it apart. At first glance, a capoeira match falls somewhere between full-contact karate and the "Soul Train" dance-off.

Capoeira is just starting to gain popularity in Asia, the traditional home of the martial arts. There are a few formal schools in Japan and Singapore, where Duran first encountered it during a short stint working for IBM.

ESCOLA BRASILEIRA E
CAPOEIRA

"I heard about capoeira from a cousin who had lived in Brazil, and from my brother who's a martial arts buff," she says. "I used to be a competitive swimmer, but when I graduated, I decided to get into another sport. Aikido was the first martial art that I tried, and I was looking for an aikido place in Singapore when I found capoeira. Since I had a martial arts background and I used to dance (with the Company of Ateneo Dancers), and capoeira was sort of a 'dance-fight,' they thought it was the perfect thing for me to try."

That was two years ago, and she hasn't stopped since. Duran, in fact, has been attracting attention lately as capoeria's veritable poster girl, even getting drafted along with other female achievers for a credit card campaign.

"The first thing that attracted me was the festive mood," she says, bringing the focus back to the sport. "Apart from all the movements, you hear the music, everybody's cheering and clapping. That's the Regional style of capoeira—the fast-paced style.

"Later, I learned there was also a slow style (called Angola), and it was the rituals that caught my attention. It's just so dynamic that I found myself really drawn into it, and now I'm really immersed in the whole capoeira culture."

When she returned to Manila, Duran began looking for local capoeira enthusiasts. Through the Internet, she found a group that had been learning the art on their own, through books and videos and—seriously—the Playstation game Tekken. They called themselves the Grupo Capoeira Manila.

Through a Filipina capoeirista from Canada, they managed to contact the Escola Brasileira de Capoeira (EBC), an international network of schools. In April this year, the Brazilians sent a teacher to Manila and the Escola Brasileira de Capoeira Philippines, the first formal school of capoeira in the country, was born.

Today, EBC Philippines holds regular classes in five gyms, with about 35 or so regular students, under the instruction of the 28-year-old Brazilian teacher known as Professor Batata ("Professor Potato"—capoeira students receive a nickname from their master when they are initiated into the sport).

A typical class begins like any martial arts session, with warm-up and stretching exercises, followed by the basics: kicking, blocking, gymnastics and so on.

Far more striking are the differences. To begin with, like all things Brazilian, capoeira is done to a beat. The preliminary workout is done to hypnotic drumbeats and chanting of distinctly African origin, from a CD player. But the more serious stuff is always done to live accompaniment, because the music is just as integral a part of capoeira as the movements. The chief instrument is the *birembau*, a bow with a resonating gourd that produces a droning buzz when struck with a stick. There are also drums, tambourines, handclaps and chanting. The music dictates the pace of the movements, starting out slow, then building up as the workout progresses.

"There's a lot more to capoeira than just the moves," says Duran. "Of course the moves are jaw-dropping and all, but when you really get into it and learn the history and philosophy, you learn that there are so many rituals to the game."

That's another big difference. There is none of the grim-and-determined, let's-see-if-your-kung fu-is-better-than-my-kung fu, kill-or-be-killed atmosphere that accompanies so many martial arts contests. The *roda* ("wheel") is the capoeira version of sparring. Students form a circle and take turns trying to outdo each other, with the teacher dictating the pace by playing the *birembau*. There is a playful, even raucous atmosphere. Laughter is allowed.

"We call it playing," explains Duran. In fact, a match is called a "game." "When we enter the *roda*, we're like kids who've done their homework and now it's time to play. It's just fun.

"When you're inside the *roda*, you actually help each other to become better players. It's more of a dialogue than a one-man attack program. Eventually, when you master the evasions and the kicks, nobody gets hurt although, of course, accidents happen. In my opinion, a perfect game is one where one person kicks and the other person just flows with the kick.

"There is still the self-defense aspect, although I don't think that's the primary reason people take up capoeira," Duran continues. "We do learn kicks, blocks, take-downs and evasions so when you do get into a fight—hopefully not—you have some moves you can use."

One thing's for sure, capoeira is one hell of a workout. The upside-down movements require a lot of upper body strength, and the acrobatics will definitely work your abs from all angles. Flexibility is a must and so is stamina.

"I'm definitely a lot more toned now compared to before," Duran says.

There are subtler changes.

"I'm more of a people person now," says the self-confessed former introvert. "I'm loving the whole communal aspect now, and it's fun for the rest of the people. After taking two or three lessons, it's like being part of a *barkada*. It's nice to see the group becoming more of a family than just a martial arts group. We help every new person adjust and learn."

"Family" is an especially apt word, since Duran's husband, Ramon Pido, is also a capoeirista.

Duran says she expects more and more Filipinos to take to capoeira, specially after April this year, when the current batch of students will undergo their *batizado* ("baptism") or formal initiation into the tradition.

"You have to appreciate all the aspects of capoeira before you can appreciate each one," says Duran. "You need to appreciate the moves, the music, the history, the philosophy. Once you imbibe all that, you play better because it's from the heart—you're not just doing the moves you learned in class. It's a very nice form of self expression when it reaches that point." Q

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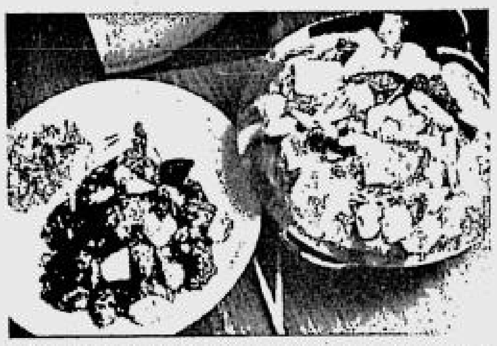


NEW BRANCH Super Bowl of China recently opened its newest branch at the 2/L of SM City North Edsa where guests can enjoy generous servings of Sweet & Sour Pork, Crispy Noodles with Assorted Seafood, dim sum, rice toppings, and other chicken, pork and seafood dishes. *For more of This Week, see page 7*

Sa Paglubog ng Araw

Kay Nanie

Nakakapagod ang maghapong sikat
ng araw at nanunuot ang init sa balat.
Ang mga ulap tila'y nagkawatak-watak
mistulang mga luhang di maipatak
sa lupang sinasaka ko't nagkatipak-tipak
naligaw naman ang mga saranggolang
naglalayag sa kawalang napakalawak
kasabay ang mga naghahabulang uwak.
Habang matiyaga kong inaasam ang
paghihiwalay ng kanyang liwanag
ako'y nanabik na aking mabanaag
ang paglubog ng araw sa sinapupunan
ng di ko maunawaang kanluran
na kung anong lakas nito ang humihila
upang lamunin ang bolang apoy.
Ito kaya ang sinasabi nilang purgatoryo
o impiyerno. marahil nagsisigaw sa init
ang mga tao rito, gatak-gatak din kaya ang lupa
at kung sakaling ang araw ay lumilisan
at nagtutungo sa silangan upang sumikat,
natitiis kaya nila ang lamig na di masukat
ng aking pag-iisip o napapabuntong-hininga
sila't tuluyan nang makakatulog nang nakahiga.
Ayokong lisanin ang bukid na di ko nasisilayan
ang paglubog ng araw, sapagkat ito ang dahilan
upang bukas mula sa malamig kong higaan
ako'y babangon muli, magsasaka sa aking lupa
at mula roon, kahit malakas ang agyat ng kabila
na iwanan ko ang araro at sa kanluran magsimula,
hihintayin ko at ng aking kabiyak
na anim na buwan nang dinadala ang aking anak,
hahawakan namin ang aming mga kamay
habang pinagmamasdan ang paghihiwalay
ng iba't-ibang kulay sa paglubog ng araw.

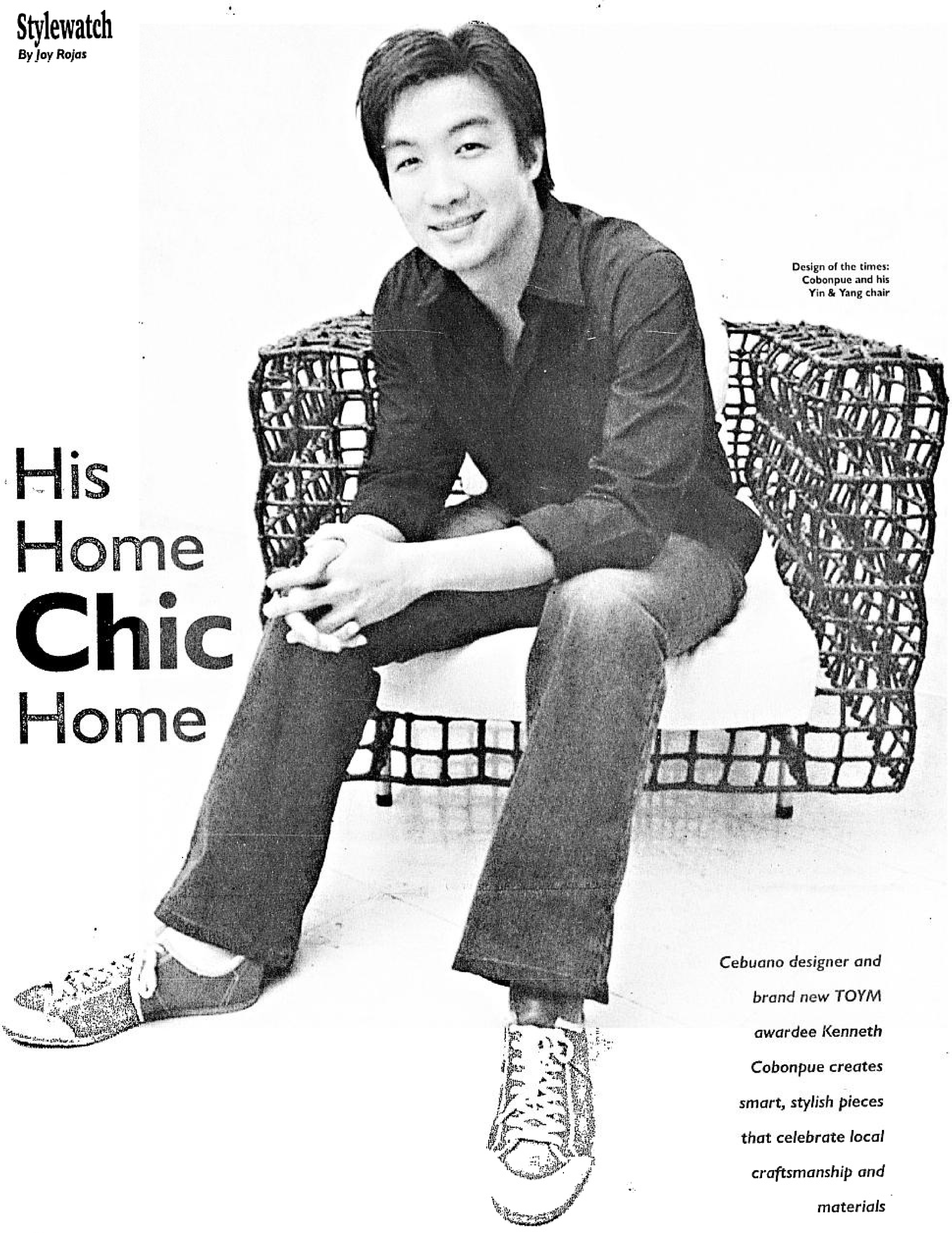
Kristian S. Cordero

The **Sunday Inquirer Magazine** accepts contributions for our regular poetry section. Interested contributors should send a printed copy of the poem (which may be in English or Filipino) together with a self-addressed stamped envelope to Ruel S. De Vera, poetry editor, Sunday Inquirer Magazine, Chino Roces (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Mascardo and Yague Streets, Makati City 1263, or e-mail to <poetry_sim@inquirer.com.ph>

Stylewatch

By Joy Rojas

His Home Chic Home



ROGER MARGALLO

Design of the times: Cobonpue and his Yin & Yang chair

Cebuano designer and brand new TOYM awardee Kenneth Cobonpue creates smart, stylish pieces that celebrate local craftsmanship and materials

If Kenneth Cobonpue hesitates to predict the future of furniture this 2004, it's because he's never been one to rely on trends. "If you design something that's beautiful and comfortable, people will want it, whether it's a trend or not," he says succinctly.

That outlook explains the clamor for his works. Three of his easy armchairs—the graceful Pigalle, the cozy Balou, and the urban Yin & Yang—have been selected by jurors to appear in the 2002 edition of the International Design Yearbook, a coup for Cobonpue, who is the first Filipino to grace the pages of the prestigious publication. Of the three, it's the modern Yin & Yang, natural and dyed rattan splits wrapped over a boxy frame of steel and wicker, that has been imitated abroad.

Magazines like I.D., Elle Décor, Wallpaper, Asiaweek and Time, have featured the Cebuano and his creations. And design authorities have recognized him for giving Philippine furniture a sophisticated, world-class appeal. In the country alone, he's won four Katha Awards for design excellence, and was honored with the Golden Shell Award in 2002 by President Arroyo. Cobonpue would meet the President again when she, together with the Philippine Jaycees Inc. and the Gerry Roxas Foundation, conferred the designer and nine other achievers with the coveted Ten Outstanding Young Men Award (TOYM) in 2003.

He's been told that his creations have soul—a rare quality indeed in an industry that thrives on mass production and cold, manufactured designs. Known for fusing industrial techniques with indigenous materials, Cobonpue complements his use of steel with sturdy native fibers like rattan, abaca, *buri* and coconut. As far as his designs go, he finds inspiration in the most unlikely of muses. A bridge, a bamboo scaffolding, and even a piece of bread have all served as springboards for existing furniture.

But for Cobonpue, true soul lies in the fact that to this day, his furniture is completely made by hand—from the building of the frames to the meticulous task of weaving. "So there's still a human touch to it," he says.

The son of Betty Cobonpue, herself a force to reckon with in the field of Philippine furniture (she founded the Cebu-based family-owned furniture company Interior Crafts of the Islands and patented a process of laminating rattan), Kenneth fancied designing even as a child. "But I didn't know that there was a school for it," he says.

Temporarily sidetracked into a business course at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, he eventually discovered the path to his passion halfway around the world. He completed a degree in Industrial Design and graduated with honors at the Pratt Institute in New York, and later took up furniture marketing and production under a state scholarship in Germany. Upon returning to Cebu, he took over the family business, slowly integrating his modern, "revolutionary" designs into a company known since 1972 for its traditional rattan offerings.

Cebu, of course, would only be the start of Cobonpue's quest to improve the flagging image of Philippine-made furniture—and Filipinos in general—abroad. Internationally, he's been marketed as Japanese, a matter he attributes to "the bad press we've been getting. 'Made in the Philippines' is not something to be proud of abroad," he rues. Over there, Philippine-made furniture is regarded as "cheap, ethnic and therefore not intended for modern homes," he reports. "That's something I'm trying to change."

And how. His association with Movement 8, an elite gathering of Filipino furniture and accessory designers formed by the Center for International Expositions and Missions (CITEM) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), has helped expose local ideas, talent and craftsmanship to the most discriminating buyers and design professionals worldwide. One wonders how a group of Pinoys stack up next to equally gifted artisans abroad, but Movement 8 has certainly done us proud. At the 2001 International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York, Movement 8's efforts stood out in a sea of 600 entries vying for the Editors Craftsmanship Award. By the end of the competition, Budji Layug, Milo Naval, Tes Pasola, Carlo Condaro, Tony Gonzales, Ann Pamintuan, Luisa Robinson, Renato Vidal, Clayton Tugonon, and Cobonpue became the first Filipinos to bring home the sought-after prize.

Of late, the biggest kick in Cobonpue's career is watching strangers snap up his pieces. "It's not branded like Gucci and it can be pretty expensive abroad," warns the designer, who sells all over the world and is available in Manila through Budji Layug's showroom on Reposo St., Makati City. "So you'll really have to like it and be confident of its design to buy it. I'm still amazed when people do."

Ironically, while his furniture has already found its way into some of the most tasteful homes both here and abroad, the place in Cebu where Cobonpue currently resides bears but a few of his works. "I still live with my mother," chuckles the 34-year-old, "so I still have to live with her things!" He does have his own private quarters, though, but because he travels a lot and designs everyday, sleep has become the sole purpose of this room. "It's really nothing to shout about," he assures.

For now at least. At the moment, Cobonpue is building his dream home. Scheduled to be finished in a year, he envisions a thoroughly modern digs, a place where form and function, technology and tradition, and the influences of East and West all live harmoniously under one roof.

Survivors' Tales

Text and Photographs
by Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

Her Long Road Back from Hell

Seven years after seeing her sexual abusers put away in prison, Pia Corvera has allowed herself to think of the future and of finding a family, at last

FOR Pia Corvera, 19, the new year truly brings on a new beginning. At about this time seven years ago, the testimony of this nursing aide student put away two men accused of sexually abusing her and another girl, both of them barely in their teens in Subic, Olongapo.

On Dec. 18, 1996, Thomas Breuer, a German, and Dutchman Lennart Van Empel were convicted of child sexual abuse and sentenced to prison terms of three and a half years, and one year respectively.

The celebrated trial brought world attention to a problem often dismissed as just another of life's realities. Corvera's story also gave an authentic face and a strong voice to countless street children turned sex workers who ply their trade on the streets as a result of desperation, deceit or greed.

Corvera was recently honored by Missio, the German Catholic Bishops' agency for international mission work, for her courage and bravery in pursuing justice against sex offenders. Her case inspired the agency to campaign against sex tourism and child abuse.

Standing up to her abusers gave *Kuwago* (literally meaning "owl," the wide-eyed girl's childhood nickname) the confidence to undertake goals that go beyond the more immediate basic meals and shelter she had imposed on herself when she realized how threadbare her circumstances were.

This children's rights advocate speaks of the dreams she now enjoys and of how far she has gone from the days when her only memories of her parents were their absence and neglect.

"I don't know anything about them or how I came to be," Pia says of her parents Juanito and Patricia. All that she knew came from stories told her by her Aunt Terry, her longtime guardian. She was born in 1984 and her mother had tried so sell her, said her aunt who then took Pia to Pampanga and then to Manila in the care of her grandparents.

Her only memory of her father was when he came to the wake of her grandfather in 1992. The coldness of that meeting still hurts, Pia recalls. "*Dedma lang kami. Ni hindi ako tinawag na anak.* (We ignored each other. He didn't even call me his daughter)," she adds.

Pia shared her grandmother Clara's attention with five other cousins and so learned to fend for herself early on. "I went through a lot," she says. "I slept on the streets and earned some money as a parking attendant and a cleaner." But roaming the streets for a living forced her to drop out of school. Pia only reached Grade 3.

What pained her most was having no one to guide her. "I felt so alone," she says. "It was scary. Nobody told me whether I was doing right or wrong." Being rudderless led her to become more daring. At nine, Day-Day, a friend three years older than her, taught Pia a game children were not supposed to play. Far from being a paradise, the Paraiso ng Batang Maynila, a playground in the midst of Manila, became the setting of her personal hell.

A chronology of Pia's case according to Preda (People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation), shows that after she was introduced to the pimp Lani (Teresita Mapalang in real life), the girl was given strict orders to keep the supposed game a secret.

"I didn't know anything about my rights," Pia says. But deceit she knows well, having seen it in Lani who sold her and Day-Day to adult men of different nationalities and perverse behaviors. She describes some of them as "*bigatin*" or prominent.

"(Lani) took almost all of the money, as much as P4,000 for every job we did. She spent it on shabu and she allowed us to watch her use it," she recalls. She chuckles at remembering how she used to be overwhelmed by the P120 that Lani handed her after every job. "For a child earning only P5, what can be more tempting than a hundred bucks?" she asks.

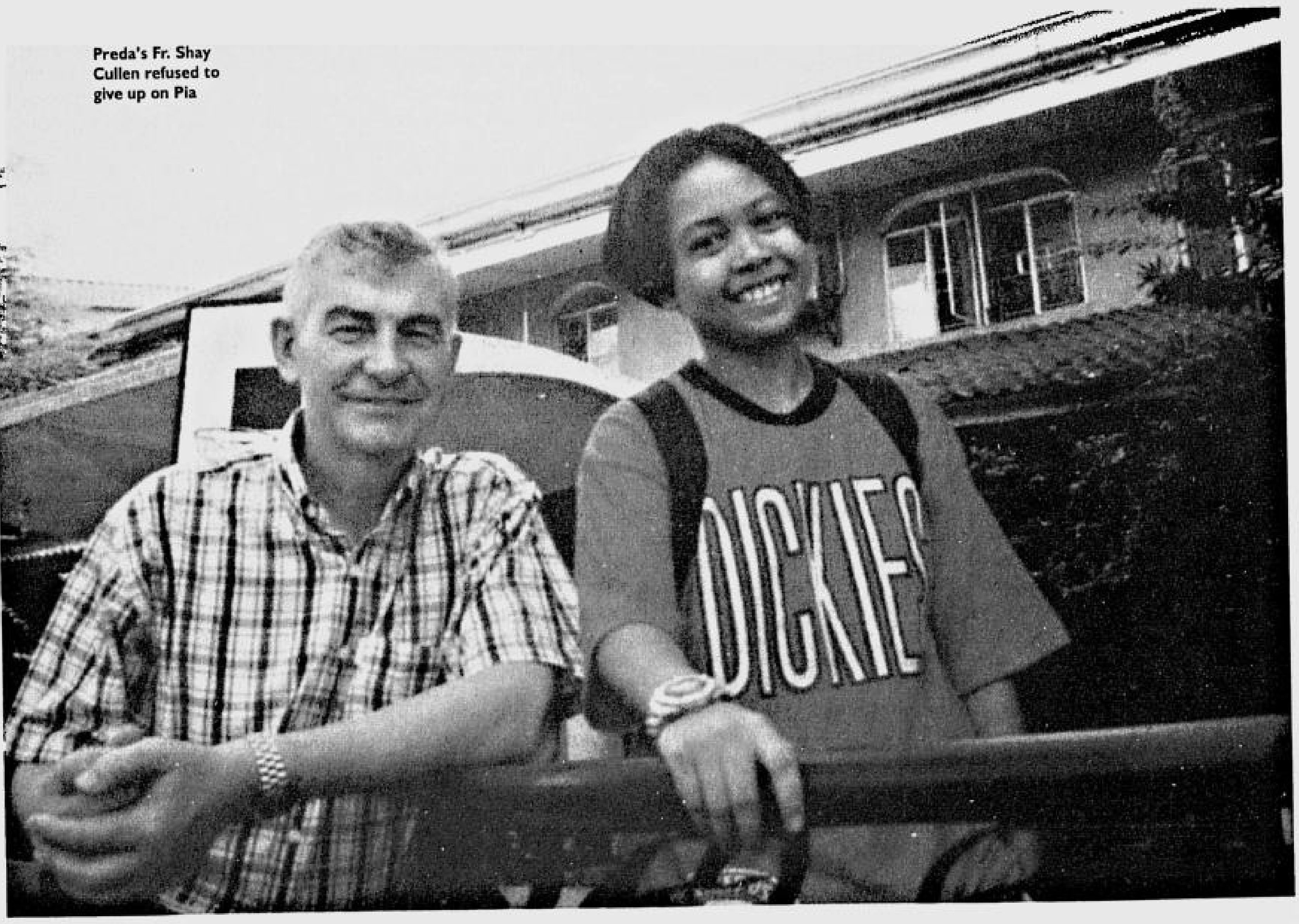
Her Aunt Terry had left for Australia by then and her grandmother was easily taken in by her lies. To dispel the old woman's suspicions about the money she was getting, Pia would say she got it through "*diskarte*" (doing odd jobs and being resourceful).

But the money wasn't enough to quell the unease and guilt that nagged her. She knew she was doing something bad but wasn't quite sure why and how to come clean about it. "I didn't know who to run to," says Pia. But the money kept rolling in, so she shrugged off her uneasiness and allowed the abuse to go on.

On Jan. 8, 1996, according to her testimony, Pia, then 12, and another prostituted teen, M.C., then 14, were taken by foreigners Breuer and Van Empel to Boracay, the island resort in Panay, where they were sexually abused. Both girls were also used in child pornography, according to the Preda report.

Fortunately, the wife of an official in Boracay, who also happens to own a hotel in the island-resort, decided to report the abuse to authorities. Pia could not recall the woman's name but remembers her fondly. "If not for her concern (*malasakit*), we would still be living abused lives," she says.

The five-page chronology of Pia Corvera's case shows a classic example of how some policemen, National Bureau of Investigation agents and lawyers in the Philippines could plant landmines in an already difficult road to justice.



Preda's Fr. Shay Cullen refused to give up on Pia

But the case also shows how priests and Bishop Gabriel Reyes, Daughters of Charity nuns in Iloilo, social workers like Delia Juanico and their officials like former Social Welfare Secretary Lina Laygo, Lourdes Balanon of the Bureau of Child and Youth Welfare, as well as justice and immigration officials, can move heaven and earth to see the case through.

Preda's Fr. Shay Cullen, an Irish priest, likewise didn't give up on Pia and M.C., and took the case to German authorities. In a matter of nine days, Breuer and Van Empel were behind bars, and Pia was released from her doubts and self-hate.

Home to Pia since has been Preda, where she finds good company among other children rescued from brothels, prison and neglectful families. Away from the streets, however, she discovers that bouncing back wasn't that easy. In class, she was taunted and made to feel unfit until she finally opted for home study to finish elementary school. She breezed through high school with the determination and courage of a warrior out to win the war against ignorance.

Since 1997, she has also found acceptance as a speaker in numerous national and international conferences, as she retold her story to parents, development workers and whoever cared to listen. "Super-interview, super-*pa*-photo-photo. *Nagdadadakdak ako kung saan-saan* (Extensive interviews, photo shoots. I give talks everywhere)," Pia says of her campaign to end child abuse.

At the Barreto High School in Subic during a Girl Scout activity when she was asked to share her life experience, a younger schoolmate asked her: "*Ate*, aren't you ashamed or afraid about what happened to you?" Pia's answer: "Why should I be ashamed or afraid? What happened to me wasn't my fault at all."

Between her encoding and filing tasks at the Preda Foundation, Pia also does counselling work, advising other abused children "to carry on, tell the truth, and believe in yourself and in the goodness of other people. Be brave, God will see you through."

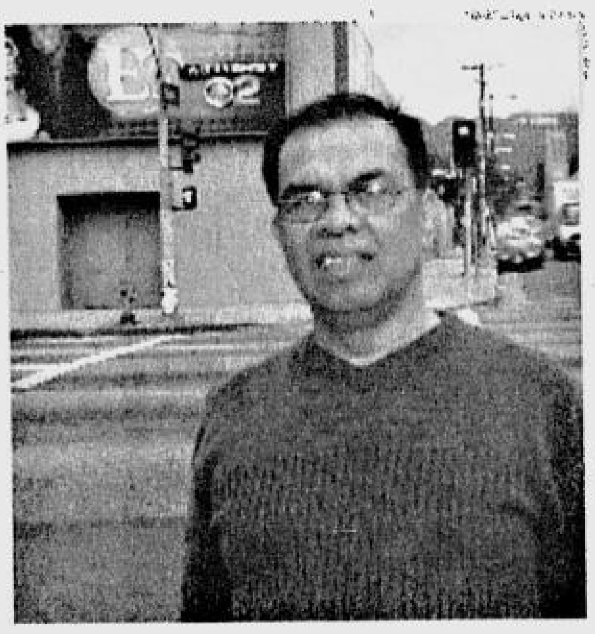
It is something she has seen happen in her own life, she says. She has finally allowed herself to think of the future, Pia says. "My Mommy (Aunt Terry) has bought a house in Cavite and plans to return for good from Australia. We're going to live there—my three brothers, my grandmother and myself. We're going to be a family at last."

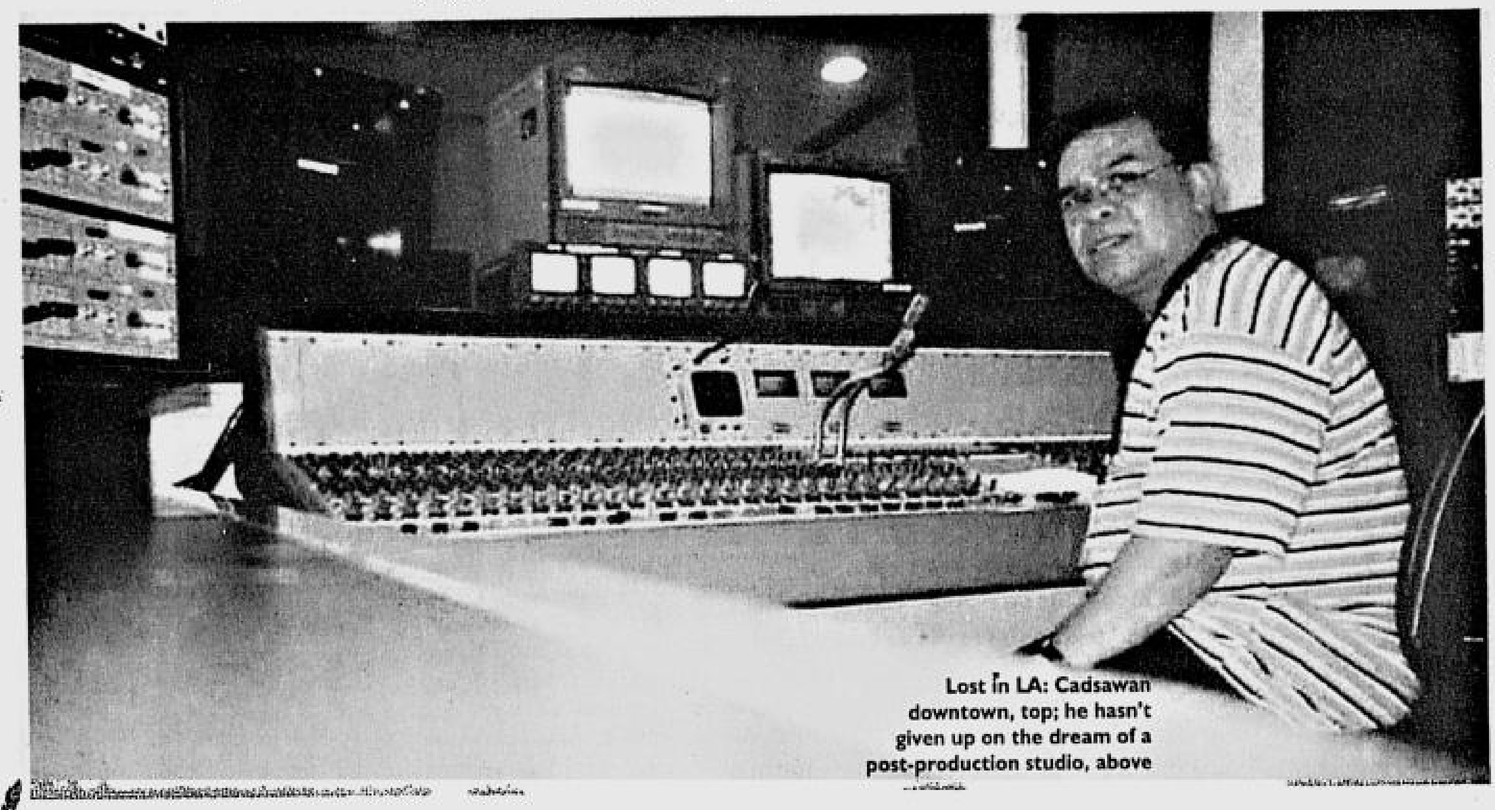
Twists of Fate

By Yong B. Chavez

Spinning Another Life

Ruben Cadsawan was a successful musical scorer on Philippine TV before starting life anew in Los Angeles. Music, however, remains very much a part of this immigrant's elusive American dream





Lost in LA: Cadsawan downtown, top; he hasn't given up on the dream of a post-production studio, above

HOW does one cope with life after dropping out of the semi-fame game?

For Ruben Cadsawan, 57, formerly one of Philippine television's most sought-after musical scorers and now a US-based hotel valet parking clerk, the answer is simple: You have to keep playing.

As a spinner and musical scorer, he has lent his talents to, among many others, rival noontime shows "Eat *Bulaga*" and "MTB *(Magandang Tanghali Bayan)*." He was also with "The Sharon Cuneta Show," "Richard Loves Lucy" and "See-True." In addition, there was a time when the musical scoring for most of Channel 5's shows was done by him, until his growing roster of ABS-CBN gigs prevented him from doing so. Apart from sit-coms and variety shows, he also worked on dramas like "Lovingly Yours, Helen" and *"Munting Paraiso."*

But it was in variety shows that he got to play. Cadsawan's adlibs, both through songs and catchphrases like *"Sipsep!"* and *"Mabuhay ang bagong kasal!"* provided comic relief to these shows' sometimes tedious proceedings. He's to be credited (or blamed, whichever way you look at it) for starting the buzz on some hit tunes by playing them over and over again on these shows.

Like most people who labor behind the camera, Cadsawan's work is more familiar to boob tube-loving Filipinos than his face. But he's one of the few off-cam talents with a decent amount of name recognition. From Inday Badiday to Vilma Santos, stars have uttered the line "Ruben, *ha!*" whenever he played a song identified with them during their shows.

Two years ago, however, Cadsawan made the life-altering decision of immigrating to America and leaving behind a television and radio musical scoring career that had spanned more than three decades. He did it for a girl named Dorie.

"There were a lot of reasons why I left," he says. "I wanted to find out about life in America, but yes, I came here also because of Dorie."

Now Mrs. Cadsawan, Dorie was the girl Ruben went to grade school with in their hometown of Pakil, Laguna. Both eventually married and had children with other people, but about 10 years ago, they met again, and thus began a true-to-life telenovela for which Cadsawan himself could have provided a dramatic musical score.

Although he had been consistently seeing Dorie in the Philippines, having to leave behind his first family for good was not an easy decision for Cadsawan. But when Dorie, who's a US citizen, moved permanently to America, he went with her.

He has three children, two of whom now work in the same profession as he did, from his previous marriage.

It is a sore situation, he concedes. "I didn't tell them beforehand that I was leaving. My children don't talk to me as much anymore. It's... sad," he says with a sigh.

"But I wanted to see if I could make it here. Besides, when 'MTB' decided not to include me in their America tour, I thought it was time to move on," he says, referring to MTB's series of US shows in 2001.

The idea of moving on had been playing in the back of his mind for a while, like bad background music. He was already considered an institution in the business, which in showbiz, can be a euphemism for "old." Each year that passed, he felt a growing disconnection with younger production staffers, and questions of relevance in a youth-obsessed industry began to creep up on him. "Some production assistants were treating me differently, with no respect," he says.

Also, other job-related issues, like royalties, started to hound him. "It used to be that recording companies offered lots of things just to get their songs played in my TV shows, but later on, some people started to call about paying royalties."

Nevertheless, he will be the first to admit that what he had was a cushy career that provided a good income. He was earning about P120,000 a month, and was able to build a five-bedroom house in Antipolo and buy a couple of cars for his family. Cadsawan was also making enough to bankroll his own post-production outfit in Quezon City, CADSOUND, now being managed by his twin sons. The company provides scoring, editing and other post-production services for commercials, TV shows and movies.

Not bad for a small town boy who started his showbiz career in radio as a humble sound effects apprentice in the late '60s. His hard work eventually paid off, and after learning his way around production work, he became a sought-after musical scorer, or as the job was called then, a spinner, someone who essentially spun records on a turntable to provide background music.

The rest is history, which he says he has no intention of finishing yet.

Closed off in a parking clerk booth, much like in a sound booth where he used to work on his showbiz projects before, Cadsawan whiles the time away planning for the day when he can do production work again. "I'm starting a post-production company here in Los Angeles soon, and once we have an editor, we can already start our business," he says.

Although his current job doesn't come with the glamor that his showbiz stint had, he has started to accept the unheralded side of the Filipino-American dream—endless hours toiling at work that may be menial, but which pays the bills.

"When I was in Manila, a friend asked what I was going to do here," he says. "I said that I would work in Jay Leno's show." He said it only half-jokingly, and has since come to realize how far-off that dream is. In Hollywood, where this interview was conducted, geography is no measure of a person's reach in terms of showbiz dream fulfillment.

Besides, Cadsawan had other more humbling US experiences. He took the California driving test six times before getting his driver's license, a necessity in car-dependent Southern California, and lost money in a botched eBay (a popular auction web site) camera equipment deal. "What can you do? That's life," he says with a wry smile.

Still, Cadsawan maintains fairly buoyant spirits despite these challenges. He hopes to go back to the Philippines in the future, though, and do TV show musical scoring once more. "I miss it," he says. "I always look forward to doing it again."

But for now, he has no complaints about being another anonymous Filipino transplant eking out an honest living in La La Land. Cadsawan is content spending his leisure hours socializing with ex-TV colleagues who are now US residents like him.

Currently, Cadsawan writes for a Filipino showbiz monthly published in Southern California, and is in the initial planning stages prior to launching his Los Angeles-based post-production company.

He doesn't think about regrets very much, and has found a less stressful way of dealing with the drama: not just facing it, but also learning how to dance to the troubled but truthful music that he has chosen.

Cadsawan, seated center, in LA, with some former showbiz friends like Dranreb Belleza (seated, leftmost) and Maila Gumila (standing, leftmost)

People of the Faith

by Corazon A. Ong
Photographs by Vicente Carreon

In The Good Sister's Shoes

Sister Felice Maningo has taken over the job of the late Sister Christine Tan as Alay Kapwa coordinator. Can she fill in the outspoken, beloved nun's rather oversized shoes?

SISTER Felicidad "Felice" Maningo thought it was all a joke when late last year Sr. Christine Tan, founder and coordinator of the urban poor cooperative Alay Kapwa, had told her, "You will be the next coordinator."

She had protested, saying that the task was too much for her, but Sr. Christine had made up her mind. When the outspoken and much-revered nun died in October 6 last year, Sr. Felice got the unenviable job of filling up her rather oversized shoes. But Sr. Christine had made the task a bit easier, says Sr. Felice, by forming a board of directors a week before she died.

Although Sr. Christine founded Alay Kapwa in the slum areas of Leveriza, Pasay in 1979, it was not until 1981 when it officially started and came to be known by its present name, Alay Kapwa Gawang Kamay Cooperative. "*Gawang kamay*, meaning hand made," explains Sr. Felice. "We need to get people jobs and our products, being hand crafted, are labor intensive. The more orders we receive, the more workers are needed and more families in the community are able to earn a living," she adds.

"At the outset, Sr. Christine was clear about one thing and she kept repeating this dictum to the people of Leveriza: *Tutulungan kayo pero dapat ay kumilos din kayo.* (You will be helped but you have to help yourselves too)."

To this day, Alay Kapwa has maintained that policy, raising the community's awareness of their rights and responsibilities and giving them dignity in the process.

"With Alay Kapwa, the people have learned to face their problems," says Sr. Felice. "They have gained confidence in themselves and realized that their world does not begin and end here. One hour a week, they have Bible sharing and discussions and that helps them become better and stronger persons," she adds.

A social worker before she joined the order of the Religious of Good Shepherd (RGS), Sr. Felice remembers staying once with a family in Leveriza, Pasay. "But that was only for three days. You don't really get much in three days."

In 1995, however, fresh from the novitiate, Sr. Felice immersed herself fully with Alay Kapwa. "I was a junior nun then, and Sr. Christine assigned me to Paliparan, Dasmariñas, Cavite, where I stayed for two years—the maximun period allowed for each apostolate assignment." .

She already knew most of the families in Paliparan whom she first met when they were still living in the Edsa-Pasay reclamation area. The government relocated the families in two batches—first in 1993 to Paliparan and next in 1995 to General Trias, Cavite. Alay Kapwa would eventually set up expansion programs in these two areas as well as in Sariaya, Quezon and Cebu, where many women, mostly mothers, are Alay Kapwa members.

Alay Kapwa did not have any building or place to speak of in Paliparan when Sr. Felice arrived there in 1995, so she moved from one family to another. "I stayed three days with each family; thus, in two years time, I practically covered the whole area of Paliparan from Phases 1 to 5."

Six months before her two-year term in the area ended, Sr. Felice started *nata de coco* and vinegar making as part of the community's income-generating projects. There was a big demand for *nata de coco* at that time. "We thought we'd go big in the export market, too, with some help from Sr. Christine's friends in Japan. As for vinegar production, we saw all that coconut juice being thrown away in the public market and thought the juice could be put into good use. So, we invited a trainer from UP Los Baños who taught vinegar making to our members."

In 1997, Sr. Felice left Paliparan for her new assignment in Cebu, her home province, where she stayed for four years. When she was reassigned to Paliparan in 2001, she discovered upon her return that the vinegar-making venture had long folded up, while production of the *nata de coco* has also been stopped. Not only was the task back breaking, it also earned less. With the help of some Alay Kapwa members, Sr. Felice decided to go into crispy *dilis* (local anchovy) production. When Sr. Christine tasted the product, she found it delicious, so she got a few packs for her friends to try. The *dilis* has since become one of the most saleable items in Alay Kapwa shops. It now sells for P30 and comes in an Alay Kapwa labeled container with the Paliparan chapter acknowledged as makers of the product.

Credit is always cited on the label of the goods to boost the morale of the Alay Kapwa members who make them. After *dilis* making, the Paliparan members also went into *polvoron* (milk candies) and peanut brittle making.

Of late, both the Paliparan and Gen. Trias chapters are busy producing Alay Kapwa's top-selling bags made of wood and strips of telephone directory paper. Their two-year-old shop in Rockwell, Makati, courtesy of a benefactor, carries these bags along with such Alay Kapwa products as laundry and multi-colored bath soaps, candles of various hues and designs, *nata de coco*, coco jam, sampaloc candies, crispy *dilis*, greeting cards, hand-crocheted items, ginger tea, garlic flakes and virgin coconut oil.

"Whatever we earn reverts to the members, who share in the profits of the goods they make and who may also avail themselves of housing loans from Alay Kapwa. Nothing goes to the sisters nor to the board," Sr. Felice explains.

With the economic slowdown hitting most businesses, she foresees marketing as Alay Kapwa's biggest problem, especially now that Sr. Christine, their indefatigable salesperson, is gone. With her many contacts and friends, she was a zealous promoter of their goods.

"Yet, even now, she continues to guide us," Sr. Felice said. "When business is slow, the mothers would pray to her, 'Help us, Sister, we still don't have any sales.' In a short while, somebody would come or call to make an order."

Fruits of their labor: Alay Kapwa's many products, top; the women of Paliparan meet and work, above

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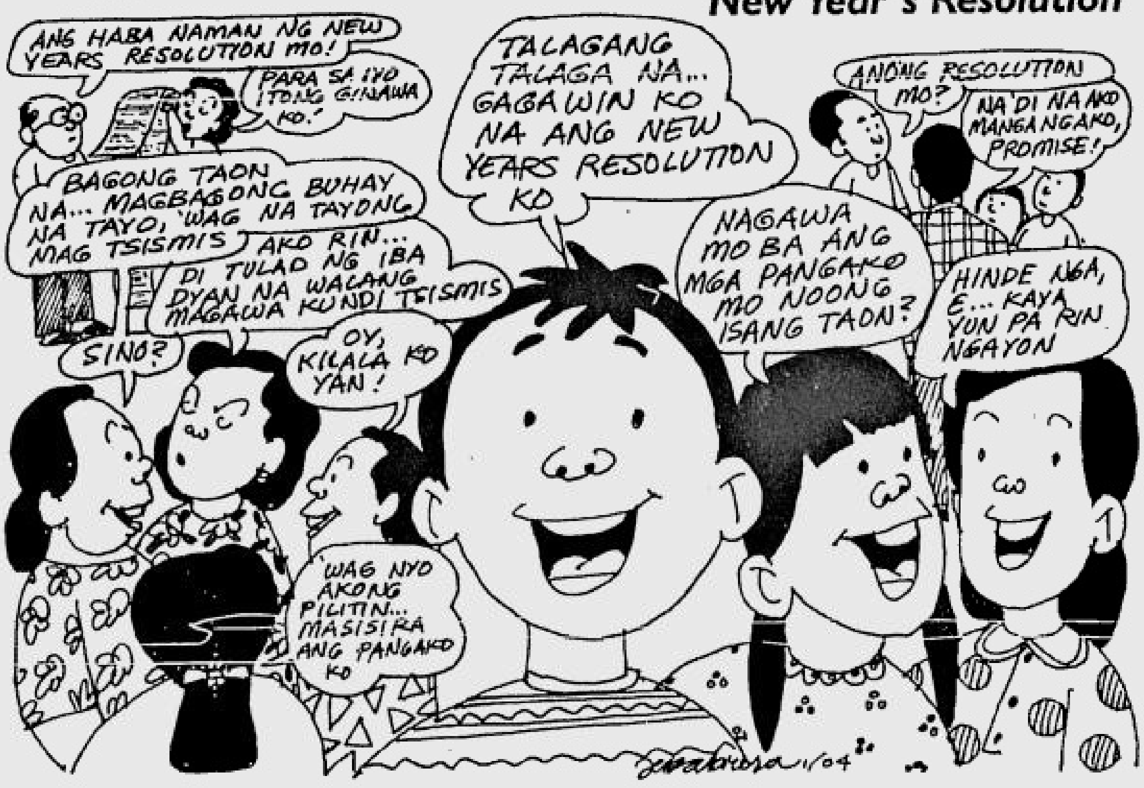
* *If you wish to help Alay Kapwa, you may visit their shops in Leveriza, Pasay (tel. no. 521-6478) or at the second level of the Power Plant Mall in Makati.*

Pinoy Nga

By Jess Abrera

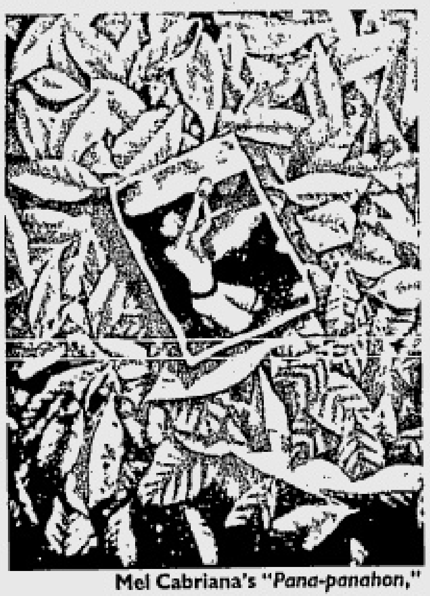
New Year's Resolution


ANG HABA NAMAN NG NEW YEARS RESOLUTION MO!
PARA SA IYO ITONG GINAWA KO.'
BAGONG TAON NA... MAGBAGONG BUHAY NA TAYO, 'WAG NA TAYONG MAG TSISMIS
AKO RIN... DI TULAD NG IBA DYAN NA WALANG MAGAWA KUNDI TSISMIS
SINO?
OY, KILALA KO YAN!
'WAG NYO AKONG PILITIN... MASISIRA ANG PANGAKO KO
TALAGANG TALAGA NA... GAGAWIN KO NA ANG NEW YEARS RESOLUTION KO
ANONG RESOLUTION MO?
NA 'DI NA AKO MANGANGAKO, PROMISE!
NAGAWA MO BA ANG MGA PANGAKO MO NOONG ISANG TAON?
HINDE NGA, E... KAYA YUN PA RIN NGAYON

This Week

Art

Crossing the Threshold, a group exhibit by 10 emerging artists who call themselves The Nakpil Group—Mel Cabriana, Alice Cuazon, Allison David, Myrna Fojas, Lita Gelano, Helen Mirasol, Pandy Singian, Peter Sutcliffe, Manny Tuason and Molly Yap. The paintings on exhibit have been culled mostly from memory and distilled from artists' life and work experiences. It will run until Jan. 5 at the SM Megamall Art Center, Building A.



Mel Cabriana's "*Pana-panahon*," on exhibit in "Crossing the Threshold" at the SM Megamall Art Center

In celebration of the Asean Japan-Exchange Year 2003, the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Japan Foundation is organizing the exhibit, **Beyond the Surface—Japanese Style of Making Things**, featuring works of photography, interior design, textiles and fiber sculpture until Jan. 8 at the CCP's Bulwagang Juan Luna.

Tables, furniture sculptures by Reg Yuson until Jan. 10 at the mag:net Gallery, The Loop, ELJ Center, 9501 Eugenio Lopez St., ABS-CBN Compound, QC.

[Sur]Reality, Danny Castillones Sillada's major show featuring oil paintings, pen & ink drawings, photographs and visual poetry, until Jan. 10, at the Philippine Art Gallery, 22 Oakville St., White Plains, Quezon City. For inquiries, call 995-7185.

Mag:net Gallery Makati presents its traditional year-end exhibit, **X-mas**, which brings together small-scale works of nearly the entire roster of the gallery's resident artists, from internationally renowned political allegorist Manuel Ocampo to artists of an emerging younger generation in Philippine art, such as MM Yu. Exhibit runs until Jan. 17 at the G/F, Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas cor. Sedeño Street, Makati City.

On exhibit at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Pasilyo Carlos Francisco and Pasilyo Vicente Manansala until Jan. 17 is the photo exhibit **The Joy of Sport**, featuring 100 prize-winning photos in the annual photography competitions organized by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Center for Unesco.

Tawo, a group exhibit featuring recent figurative paintings by *Ilonggo* artists Tara Illenberger, Nunelucio Alvarado, Nelson Ferraris and Edgar Ferraris at Penguin Café and Gallery, Remedios Street, Malate, Manila until Jan. 18.

MonayLeeSa, a solo exhibit of paintings by Romeo Lee at Finale Art Gallery, Level 4, SM Megamall Building A from Jan. 6 to 18. For details, call 634-2311.

Buklod, a year-end group exhibit organized by Kulay Diwa Art Galleries which features 25 of its promising young artists—Alexander Abon, Renato Barja, Mark Barretto, Robert Besana, Leslie de Chavez, Marc Cosico, Reynold de la Cruz, Carlo Gabuco, Carlo Gernale, Christopher Guillergan, Michael Lagos, Kurt Lluch, Joseph Lofranco, Mark Magugat, Lea Padilla, Ikoy Ricio, Raoul Rodriguez, Don Salubayba, CJ Tañedo, Kitty Taniguchi, Maria Taniguchi, Juanito Torres, Clairelynn Uy, Ian Victoriano and Christopher Zamora. The show runs until Jan. 20 at Kulay Diwa, 25 Lopez Avenue, Lopez Village, Sucat Parañaque. For details, call 826-0574.

Music

The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of French conductor Dominique Fanal, welcomes the New Year with French music and a Filipino touch on Jan. 9 at 8 p.m. at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo. A highlight of the concert will be the Philippine premiere of J. Francaix "Danse Suite in the Style of the First Empire," music from the movie "Napoleon." The show, billed as **Concert for Two Pianos**, features pianists Raul Sunico and Cristine Coyiuto. The two pianists will be performing F. Poulenc's "Concert for Two Pianos in D minor." For tickets, call CCP Marketing at 551-7930 832-1125 loc. 1801 to 1806.

Cinema

Cristine Coyiuto is a featured pianist in the PPO's New Year concert

Pelikula@titusbrandsma will present coming-of-age flicks featuring "My Father's Glory" (France), "Ghost World" (USA) and "Little Cheung" (Hong Kong) on Jan. 10 at 1 p.m. at Titus Brandsma Center (24 Acacia St., Cubao, Quezon City). For details, call 721-8677 / 726-7763 (Jofti) or 839-7351 (Francis).

Atbp

A Falun Dafa workshop will be held on Jan. 10 at 1 p.m. at the Philippine Cooperative Center, 90 Balete Drive Extension, near corner E. Rodriguez Ave., QC. Falun Dafa is a Chinese cultivation practice for mind and body with five gentle, easy-to-learn qigong exercises and meditation. Free of charge. For inquiries, call 0919-404-7829 or 0927-232-6586.

To complement "Essence and Sympathies," an ongoing exhibit of works by Philippine-born artists who do their art abroad, renowned filmmaker Raymond Red attempts to deconstruct national and transnational representations in media in his lecture **Negotiating Filipino Identity in Film** on Jan. 17, from 2-4 p.m. (P100 admission). The Lopez exhibition is ongoing until March 15 at The Lopez Memorial Museum located at the G/F, Benpres Building, Exchange Road corner Meralco. Museum days and hours are Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays at 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For details, call Fanny at 631-2417 or 449-2355.

Mandarin Oriental's Pure Yoga conducts another weight reduction therapy program under the direction of resident yoga instructor, Prakash Singh Bisht, from Jan. 5 to 31. The program aims to help its participants shed off excess pounds through various yoga poses complemented by breathing and cleansing exercises. The first batch runs from Jan. 5 to 17 and the second batch, from Jan. 19 to 31. A full course, which is offered at P2,500 per participant, comprises seven hours spread out in six consecutive sessions. Time slots available are from 9 to 10 a.m. or from 8 to 9 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; or Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Pre-registration is required. For inquiries, call 750-8888 ext. 2105.

Businessmaker Academy's calendar of seminars for January: Creative Keepsakes for Fun & Profit (Jan. 15); Creative Beaded Bags (Jan. 16); Creative Bead Accessories Level 1 (Jan. 17 or 23); Creative Weddings for Couples & Wedding Planners (Jan. 17 or 30); Creative Balloon Arrangements (Jan. 22); Creative Box Art (Jan. 29); Creative Floral Arrangement for Weddings & Parties (Jan. 24); Creative Candy-making (Jan. 30); Creative Bead Accessories Level 2 (Jan. 31); Creative Photography (Jan. 31); Creative Writing (Jan. 31); Effective Events Planning & Management (Jan. 15); Effective Sales Communication Techniques (Jan. 15); Effective Oral Presentation Techniques for Business (Jan. 16); Guide to Accounting for Non-Accountants (Jan. 16); Effective Sales Probing & Negotiation Techniques (Jan. 17); Effective Inventory Management (Jan. 22); Effective Business Writing (Jan. 22); Effective Client-Servicing (Jan. 23); Guide to a Tax-Efficient Business (Jan. 24); Effective Corporate Image Enhancement (Jan. 29); Effective Leadership & Supervisory Skills Development (Jan. 30); How to Start & Manage Your Own Business (Jan. 24); How to Find, Start & Succeed in a Franchise Business (Jan. 29), and Personal Money Management with Intro to Investing (Jan. 23). All seminars will be held at Suite 1503A West Tower, PSE Building (Tektite), Ortigas Center. For inquiries, call 687-4445 or 687-3416.

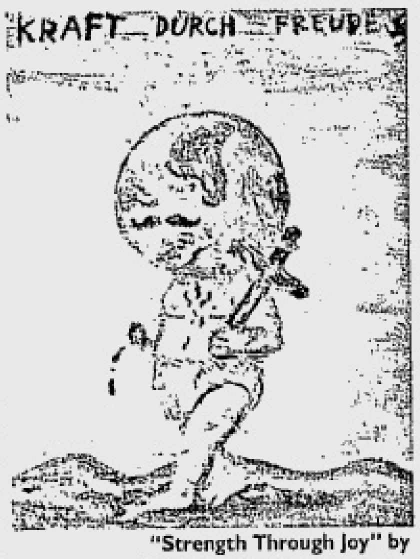
Prakash Singh Bisht is the yoga instructor at the Mandarin Oriental's Pure Yoga

Starting Your Own Preschool/Child Care Center (Module I) to be held on Jan. 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the ACCM Building, 102 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. Seminar fee is P3,995 inclusive of course workbook, meal, snacks and certificate. For reservations, call 823-2615 or text 0919-8270776.

The Philippine Board on Books for Young People awards the **2004 Salanga Prize** to Jean Lee C. Patindol for **Papa's House, Mama's House**, a unique story about the families of separated or annulled couples. Patindol chairs the Dept. of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of St. La Salle in Bacolod City. Four other stories won honorable mention: "Ang Kahon ni Maru" by Cynthia Villafranca; "Magkano Papuntang Antipolo" by Edgar Samar; "May Gulong na Bahay" by Genaro Cruz, and "Pantinga" by Francis Banta.

Photoworld World 2004, the biggest photography event in the country, will be held from Feb. 25 to March 1 at Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City. This year's theme is "Photography Without Limits." Top foreign and local photography experts from various fields of expertise will present and share new techniques and technology to all participants in the workshops to be held at the Asian Institute of Management. Interested companies can join the trade fair while students, photographers and hobbyists are invited to join the seminars. For details, call 843-5341 and 813-7420.

The New Worlds Alliance, together with Fully Booked and Solar USA, present **A Long Expected Party: The 2nd Philippine Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention** to be held on Jan. 17 and 18 at the Power Plant Mall at the Rockwell Center, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Hosted by The Philippine Tolkien Society, the convention features a showcase of exhibits, seminars, contests, music, film screenings and all the merchandise you can get your hands on. The convention will feature, among others, the fandom of Frank Herbert's "Dune," "Buffy The Vampire Slayer" and "Angel," "Harry Potter," "X-Files," "The Matrix," "Star Wars," "Star Trek," "The Lord of the Rings," and "Smallville," as well as all colors of gamers and enthusiasts. For inquiries, call Oneal T. Rosero of the The Philippine Tolkien Society at mobile number (917) 8201330 or e-mail onealtr@yahoo.com.



"Strength Through Joy" by Manuel Ocampo, on view at Mag:net Gallery Makati

The Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation is offering **basic and advanced photography courses**. The basic course will start on Jan. 11 while the advanced course will be on Jan. 10 at Yslas Restaurant inside Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Manila. The basic workshop covers practical tips and techniques for better picture-taking, knowledge in composition, use of flash, filters, portrait lighting, basic posing and practice shoot. The advanced course is for those who want to further their knowledge and plan to open up photo studios or become professional photographers. For inquiries, call Angel Daylo and Boy Capala at 813-7420 and 843-5341.

The **Mandy Navasero Photoworkshop** offers a three-day session on **digital photography**. Guest lecturer is David Hanson, a technical photographer while Navasero will discuss the elements of a good photograph. Participants will gain technical and artistic know-how needed to succeed in electronic visual communications. Workshop fee is P6,500 and offers hands-on exercises and critique. Workshop schedules are Jan. 10, 17 and 24; Feb. 7, 21 and 22, and March 6, 13 and 20 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For registration, call 522-5185, or 899-1767 or visit Mandy's studio at Room 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati City.

Kasalan sa Pilipinas, a wedding fair set on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 at The Forum of the PICC, CCP Complex, will present a comprehensive list of wedding suppliers from all over the country. There will be a wide array of choices of new products and services that cater to all kinds of budget and requirements ranging from catering, venues, bridal gown designers and other wedding essentials. The fair will also feature Philippine craftsmen as they present their creativity in the giveaways and souvenirs category. For details, call 825-3482 or 825-0804.

X-manila

Island Cove Resort and Leisure Park in Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite, launched two **new food outlets—Xiang Li**, a Chinese fusion restaurant offering Cantonese and Szechuan cuisine distinctly spiced with Filipino flavors, and **Fisherman's Deck**, a bar overlooking breezy Manila Bay and Roxas Boulevard night sky offering the best seafood pulutan, beer and acoustic entertainment nightly. For reservations, call (02) 810-3718 or (046) 434-0210.

The **4th Vipassana 10-day meditation retreat** will be held on Feb. 16-27, 2004 at Holy Family Retreat House, Bgy. Dolores, Taytay, Rizal. For details, visit the website www.dhamma.org or call Gener Mendoza (0918-9058750), Rissa Dimapilis (0917-8338732), Rudy del Rosario (02) 823-1418 or Art Pambid (02) 643-4164.

For this week's bands and schedules call:
- Hard Rock Café (893-4662-65)
- Virgin Café : QC (926-7982)
- '70s Bistro: 46 Anonas St., QC (922-0492)
- Hobbit House: 1801 Mabini St., Malate, Manila (521-7604)
- Strumm's: El Pueblo, Ortigas (637-3009)

The SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE welcomes listings of events in and outside Metro Manila. Please send announcements at least two weeks in advance, and include contact numbers for inquiries on schedules

Backpages

Vilma for All Seasons

The Philippine movie icon has seen her legacy spread to politics and progeny

How does one even begin to talk about The Star For All Seasons herself, Vilma Santos? The winner of seven URIAN awards, FAMAS Hall of Famer (five trophies), and various STAR and Film Academy of the Philippines awards, her stardom is rivaled only by the Superstar Ms. Nora Aunor, whom Vilma considers her "*kumare*."

She graced SIM's cover on October 1, 1989. Her performance in "Dama de Noche" impressed even the most loyal Noranians and won her her first FAMAS Best Actress award. Vilma won yet another one, along with a Catholic Mass Media Award and an Urian for her role as Christoper de Leon's other woman in the critically-acclaimed movie "*Relasyon*." Some of her most memorable roles include "Darna," "Trudis *Liit*" and "Burlesk Queen." Her success on the big screen spawned a weekly TV show called "Vilma," proving her versatility as an all-around performer. Vilma has also shown another side to her, appearing in movies tinged with political and social themes such as "Sister Stella L.," "*Bata Bata Paano Ka Ginawa*," "*Anak*," "*Dekada* '70," and ultimately venturing out into politics herself as Mayor of Lipa, Batangas. Aside from ocassional film roles and her political duties, Vilma plays devoted wife to Sen. Ralph Recto and doting mother to sons Christian and Luis, who is into showbiz himself as a VJ for MYX.

Mia Saavedra

SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE
VILMA SANTOS
Constant Star

All-around performer

Movers and Shakers

By Ester G. Dipasupil
Photographs by Mandy Navasero

A Doctor of Many Gifts

Obstetrician and gynecologist, gifted singer, talented cook, mother of two, and wife in a most unusual but thriving marriage—Dr. Rebecca Singson gives new meaning to the adjective 'multi-faceted'

EIGHT years ago, Rebecca Singson was, in her own words, "just like any other doctor." Then, the pretty physician with a budding practice as an obstetrician-gynecologist lost her singing voice. A promising soprano who had cross-enrolled at the University of the Philippines College of Music (UPCM) while in medical school, Singson, who loves her stethoscopes as well as her solfeggios, felt her world come crashing down on her.

For eight months in 1995, she went to seven ear-nose-throat specialists who prescribed eight kinds of antibiotics, antihistamines and anti-fungal medicines to restore her voice. "I took everything that was available in the market, but none of them worked," recalls the UPCM graduate. A sister told her to try an antioxidant that promised a cure. In three weeks, Singson not only got her voice back; she became an advocate of nutrients and supplements that help nurse one back to health the natural way.

Not that she has abandoned western medicine. "What I practice is integrative medicine that incorporates the natural with the conventional," she explains. "When I handle a patient, for example, I alter their diets or eating habits. I am concerned about what she eats because this impacts on her health, and ultimately, her child."

A firm believer in the saying that you are what you eat, Singson teaches her patients the importance of eating the right foods. "This requires a certain consciousness and a resolve to junk a lifestyle that the patient has probably been so comfortable with for so many years, and bad habits that appear hard to break at the start," she stresses.

Singson's kitchen legerdemain has invited orders for her distinctively healthy dishes

It helps that Singson is married to an organic vegetarian, Luciano Zahar, an Italian she met 11 years ago while on a hospital grant in Italy. "Luciano is a health food freak and abhors anything that is packed with preservatives or laced with insecticides," she says, adding that there are, at present, 4,000 potentially harmful chemicals that have found their way into the food chain.

How she found her life partner Luciano is in itself another interesting story. The couple met in St. Paul's Church, close to the hospital in Trieste, Italy, where she trained. "I was praying when, from the corner of my eye, I noticed this 6'2" hunk, who looked like he had just stepped out of the pages of GQ, gazing at me," she recalls. "Later, he introduced himself and said he was wondering where I was from. At that time, I had long, black hair, and when I told him I was from the Philippines, he said, 'I thought so.' It turned out that he had been corresponding with a Filipino lady doctor he had met in Medjugorje. "

From the brief conversation, Singson discovered that the Italian with Balkan origins was a devout Catholic with a devotion to Our Lady of Medjugorje. The couple soon hit it off and began dating earnestly. "He invited me for coffee. That led to a lunch date, then *merienda*," she continues. "His house was only 15 minutes away from the hospital, so he came to visit everyday. I thought: This is a friendship that could lead to something. "

Eleven months later, they got married in civil and religious rites in Manila. With a flourishing medical practice, Singson was ready to drop everything and fly back to Italy with her new husband. But after weighing the pros and cons, the Zahars decided to pursue a long-distance relationship that continues to endure, despite warnings and well-meaning advice from friends and kin. Maybe this is what makes the marriage work, we tell her. Singson replies with ripples of laughter.

Pretty to a fault, the gregarious Singson is not without her coterie of male admirers, but she has managed to keep the wolves at bay. She is also not bothered that her handsome husband is a prize catch for preying bachelorettes or passionate Mrs. Robinsons. "Luciano is a very spiritual person; I have no reason not to trust him," she puts it simply.

When she delivered her twins, Giulia and Giovanni, the doting father stayed in Manila for six months and helped her not only with the house chores but also with the feeding, until she was ready to face the new challenges of motherhood and coping in a household with an absentee husband.

"I grew up in a home where I was used to not having my father around," Singson says. "Being an airline pilot, dad was frequently out of the country, and our family had grown accustomed to celebrating birthdays, holidays and other important family events without him. So for me, this wasn't such a big deal. I also made it a point to discuss this unusual relationship with my children when they were old enough to understand. So far, I don't think they have any problems with the fact that their father has to work (with the University of Trieste administration) in Italy, and I, over here. "

Music remains a treasure to the talented doctor

The children see their father twice a year, with the best times reserved for Christmas. Last year, for Christmas, they went beach-combing in Boracay; this year, it will be spent either roasting marshmallows and chestnuts by a fireplace in Tagaytay, or being beach bums again in a Batangas seaside resort.

As if she were not busy enough (Singson is a consultant at the Makati Medical Center and the Asian Hospital Medical Center, and writes a popular column for Baby Magazine), the civic-minded *doctora* is just as active with the Rotary Club of Makati, where she is the current charter president, as she is in the kitchen, the core of her home in Metro Manila.

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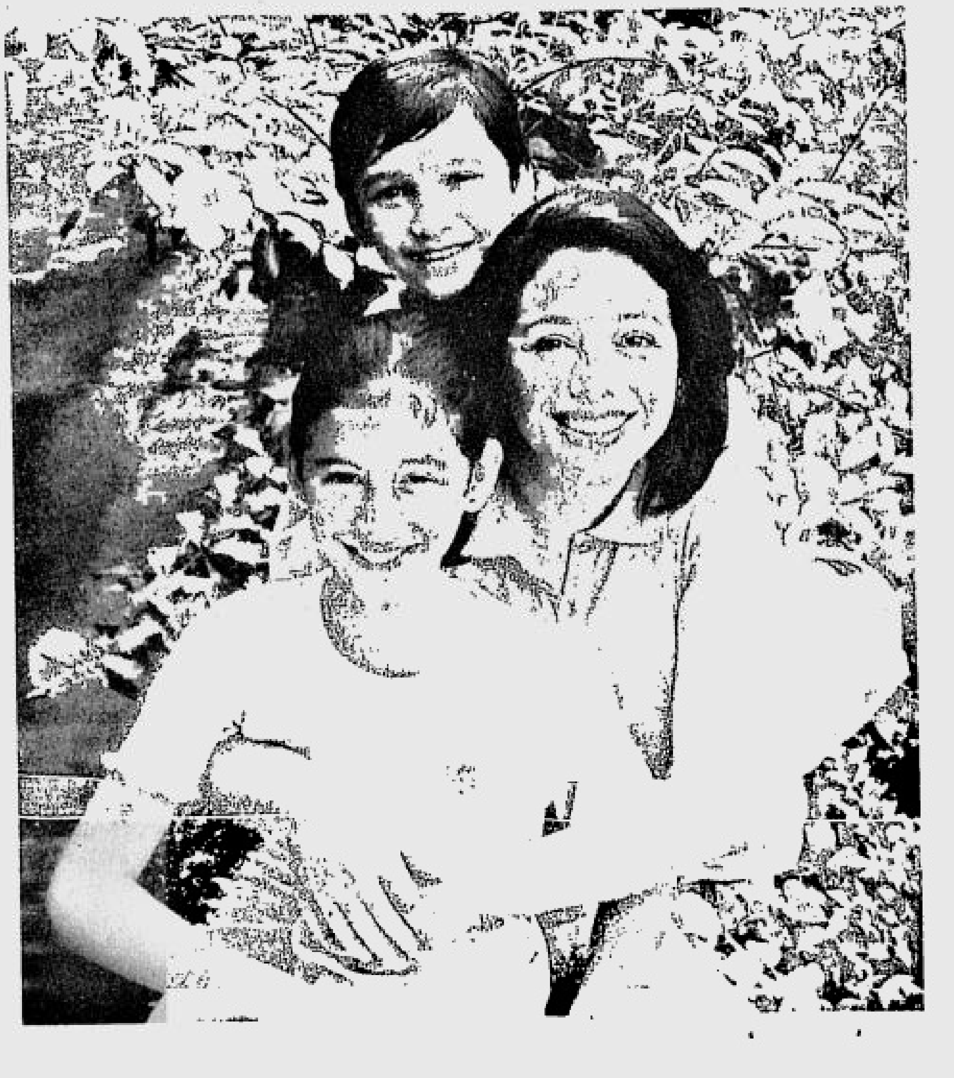
Living the good life with twins Giovanni and Giulia



Movers and Shakers

By Ester G. Dipasupil
Photographs by Mandy Navasero

A Doctor of Many Gifts

Obstetrician and gynecologist, gifted singer, talented cook, mother of two, and wife in a most unusual but thriving marriage—Dr. Rebecca Singson gives new meaning to the adjective 'multi-faceted'

EIGHT years ago, Rebecca Singson was, in her own words, "just like any other doctor." Then, the pretty physician with a budding practice as an obstetrician-gynecologist lost her singing voice. A promising soprano who had cross-enrolled at the University of the Philippines College of Music (UPCM) while in medical school, Singson, who loves her stethoscopes as well as her solfeggios, felt her world come crashing down on her.

For eight months in 1995, she went to seven ear-nose-throat specialists who prescribed eight kinds of antibiotics, antihistamines and anti-fungal medicines to restore her voice. "I took everything that was available in the market, but none of them worked," recalls the UPCM graduate. A sister told her to try an antioxidant that promised a cure. In three weeks, Singson not only got her voice back; she became an advocate of nutrients and supplements that help nurse one back to health the natural way.

Not that she has abandoned western medicine. "What I practice is integrative medicine that incorporates the natural with the conventional," she explains. "When I handle a patient, for example, I alter their diets or eating habits. I am concerned about what she eats because this impacts on her health, and ultimately, her child."

A firm believer in the saying that you are what you eat, Singson teaches her patients the importance of eating the right foods. "This requires a certain consciousness and a resolve to junk a lifestyle that the patient has probably been so comfortable with for so many years, and bad habits that appear hard to break at the start," she stresses.

Singson's kitchen legerdemain has invited orders for her distinctively healthy dishes

It helps that Singson is married to an organic vegetarian, Luciano Zahar, an Italian she met 11 years ago while on a hospital grant in Italy. "Luciano is a health food freak and abhors anything that is packed with preservatives or laced with insecticides," she says, adding that there are, at present, 4,000 potentially harmful chemicals that have found their way into the food chain.

How she found her life partner Luciano is in itself another interesting story. The couple met in St. Paul's Church, close to the hospital in Trieste, Italy, where she trained. "I was praying when, from the corner of my eye, I noticed this 6'2" hunk, who looked like he had just stepped out of the pages of GQ, gazing at me," she recalls. "Later, he introduced himself and said he was wondering where I was from. At that time, I had long, black hair, and when I told him I was from the Philippines, he said, 'I thought so.' It turned out that he had been corresponding with a Filipino lady doctor he had met in Medjugorje. "

From the brief conversation, Singson discovered that the Italian with Balkan origins was a devout Catholic with a devotion to Our Lady of Medjugorje. The couple soon hit it off and began dating earnestly. "He invited me for coffee. That led to a lunch date, then *merienda*," she continues. "His house was only 15 minutes away from the hospital, so he came to visit everyday. I thought: This is a friendship that could lead to something. "

Eleven months later, they got married in civil and religious rites in Manila. With a flourishing medical practice, Singson was ready to drop everything and fly back to Italy with her new husband. But after weighing the pros and cons, the Zahars decided to pursue a long-distance relationship that continues to endure, despite warnings and well-meaning advice from friends and kin. Maybe this is what makes the marriage work, we tell her. Singson replies with ripples of laughter.

Pretty to a fault, the gregarious Singson is not without her coterie of male admirers, but she has managed to keep the wolves at bay. She is also not bothered that her handsome husband is a prize catch for preying bachelorettes or passionate Mrs. Robinsons. "Luciano is a very spiritual person; I have no reason not to trust him," she puts it simply.

When she delivered her twins, Giulia and Giovanni, the doting father stayed in Manila for six months and helped her not only with the house chores but also with the feeding, until she was ready to face the new challenges of motherhood and coping in a household with an absentee husband.

"I grew up in a home where I was used to not having my father around," Singson says. "Being an airline pilot, dad was frequently out of the country, and our family had grown accustomed to celebrating birthdays, holidays and other important family events without him. So for me, this wasn't such a big deal. I also made it a point to discuss this unusual relationship with my children when they were old enough to understand. So far, I don't think they have any problems with the fact that their father has to work (with the University of Trieste administration) in Italy, and I, over here. "

Music remains a treasure to the talented doctor

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